



observer

February 10, 2004 Vol. 17 Issue 1

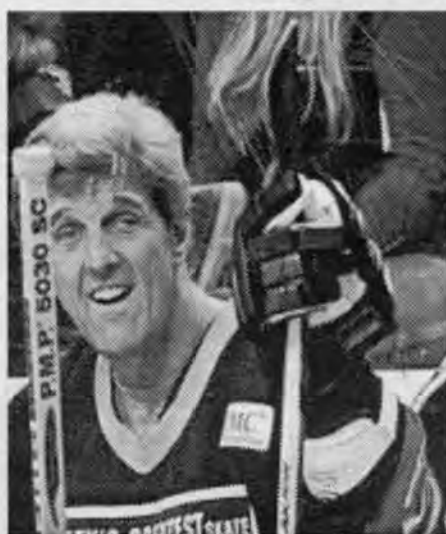
John Kerry - Kills Goalies and Republicans

John Kerry entered the political arena as an opponent of the Vietnam War after he returned from his tour of duty on the Mekong Delta. Back in the States, he founded Vietnam Veterans of America and testified before Congress as a spokesman for Vietnam Veterans against the War. But don't get the wrong idea—you won't find pictures of Kerry getting beaten up by cops in demonstrations. He was described as "a veteran whose articulate call to reason rather than anarchy seemed to bridge the gap between the Abbie Hoffman's of the world and Mr. Agnew's so-called 'Silent Majority.'" Since winning a Senate seat in Massachusetts, Kerry has kept his reputation as a moderate liberal.

The AFL-CIO has given Kerry a rating of 90% and the candidate espouses the usual centrist workers rights platform. In the past he has "fought to raise the minimum wage, cosponsored bills to outlaw striker replacement and provide workers with Family and Medical Leave to spend time with a new child or care for a family member." But he also voted for the nefarious Welfare Reform. His plan to "fight his heart out" to bring back the three million jobs lost under Dubya includes "creating jobs through a new manufacturing jobs credit, by investing in new energy industries, restoring technology, and stopping layoffs in education." In addition, he is proposing a tax credit on the first \$4,000 of every year of college tuition.

On the environment Kerry looks even better. He led the fight against drilling in ANWR and has a plan to increase energy efficiency and invest in alternative energy sources. "Today we have an energy policy of big oil, by big oil, and for big oil," he said. "It may work for their profits, but it will never work for America." In the Senate, his voting record earned him a rating of 96% from the League of Conservation Voters—the highest of any major primary candidate. Environmental issues may have a personal attraction to Kerry, since he met his wife at the Earth Summit in Rio.

Earlier in the campaign, one of the biggest reasons more Democrats were reluctant to throw their support behind the usually reliable Kerry is his vote in favor of the Iraq War. Currently his position is a middle ground between what he sees as two sides: "On one side is President Bush—who has taken America off onto the road of unilateralism. On the other side are those in the Democratic Party who threaten to take us on a trail of confusion and retreat." His military background and membership on military and terrorism related Senate committees forms the basis of his credibility on security issues.



In other Foreign Policy matters, Kerry proposed the Code of Conduct of Arms Transfers Act that "would prohibit U.S. military assistance and arms transfers to nations that are undemocratic, do not adequately protect the human rights of their citizens, or engage in acts of armed aggression." Apparently, he doesn't consider those nations to include Israel, for whom he has voiced a strong commitment. At the same time, he believes that "Israelis expect there will be a Palestinian state" and that "the Bush Administration's road map—albeit long overdue—[is] an acceptable approach for reinvigorating the peace process." Another key component of his Foreign Policy platform is a commitment to "provide at least \$30 billion in the fight against AIDS by 2008."

While personally opposed to gay marriage, Kerry supports civil unions. He has made comments indicating that if public opinion favored gay marriage, he would follow along. This sort of shilly-shallying is also evident in his newfound "courage to roll back Bush's tax cuts for the wealthiest Americans so we can invest in education and healthcare." A few months ago he lambasted Dean for making an "extraordinary gaffe" by calling for the repeal of the tax cuts.

Kerry has promised to appoint only pro-choice judges to the Supreme Court, and believes that contraception coverage must be included in health care plans. To close the pay gap and "make equal pay for equal work a reality, not a slogan," he would improve enforcement of existing laws and disclosure about employer payment practices.

Dennis Kucinich - Vegan Runs for President

In the 1970's, Cleveland's municipal power company was about to be bought out by its private competitor. Dennis Kucinich ran for mayor on a platform of blocking the sale and he won, becoming the youngest mayor of a major city in the history of the nation. But the business interests pushing for the sale wouldn't give up just because the voters had spoken. After Kucinich blocked the sale, the banks that had a major interest in the buy-out retaliated by defaulting on the city's loans. Kucinich lost his re-election bid and dropped out of politics. Fast-forward fifteen years: a study reveals that Kucinich's principled action saved the people of Cleveland over \$300 million in the long run, and the city council passes a resolution thanking him. His political career begins again, and he hasn't lost an election since.

I suppose there are two lessons you could draw from this story. One: Kucinich is a principled progressive who won't be bought out. Two: When you are a principled progressive who can't be bought out, it's hard to win elections until you are vindicated fifteen years later.

Kucinich probably has the most insistently anti-war stance of any candidate. He organized opposition to the war in Congress. His plan is for US troops to be home within 90 days of his taking office, to be replaced by UN troops, until Iraqis are ready to provide for their own security. All efforts to privatize Iraq must cease as well and the UN, not the US, will decide who gets reconstruction contracts. He has also promised to "cut bloated and unneeded weaponry from a military budget that now almost equals the military spending of all other countries combined."

Further establishing his credentials as the definitive anti-war candidate, Kucinich has proposed a Department of Peace, which would make non-violence an integral part of US policy. "Its work in violence control will be to support disarmament, treaties, peaceful coexistence and peaceful consensus building. Its focus on economic and political justice will examine and enhance resource distribution, human and economic rights and strength-

en democratic values."

On the Middle East, Kucinich has called for a Palestinian State and has denounced Israeli human rights abuses: "If we seek to require the Palestinians, who do not have their own state, to adhere to a higher standard of conduct, should we not also ask Israel, with over a half century experience with statehood, to adhere to the basic standard of conduct, including meeting the requirements of international law?"

Another provision of Kucinich's Foreign Policy would be the withdrawal of the US from the WTO and replacing it with individual trade agreements that protect worker's rights and the environment. He is the only candidate to have marched with anti-globalization protesters in Seattle.

For virtually his entire career Kucinich was pro-life (he is a Roman Catholic). But recently he switched to pro-choice and has declared that if elected, he will only appoint judges who promise to defend Roe vs. Wade. He would also make abortions available through Medicaid. Another issue where Kucinich differs from the Catholic Church is gay marriage, which he emphatically supports.

When Kucinich called for the labeling and testing of all GMO's, it scared the biotech industry into launching a \$50 million advertising campaign. He also supports investment in alternative energy and has proposed a "Green Deal" to share renewable energy technology with other nations. If that doesn't prove his commitment to environmental issues, he is also a vegan.

Other stands that he has taken, such as voting against the Patriot act in the height of post 9-11 hysteria, calling for universal single-payer health insurance and demanding that the Justice Department break up media monopolies, prompted the Baltimore Sun to say that Kucinich "is reminding the other candidates that running for president should be something more than a contest of style, looks and charisma, little of which he has."

John Edwards - Standing by the Small Guys

John Edwards' platform includes many of the Democratic Party's standard proposals. He advocates increasing workers' rights, noting that real wages have gone down 20% since the seventies. Although his proposals are not particularly original or radical, they demonstrate an interest in the traditional Democratic working-class constituency.

The image cultivated by Edwards is of a nice down-homey guy who by hard work and some good luck ended up a US Senator. He is very photogenic, standing among verdant trees in his "blue-collar" clothes. The image is not entirely artificial. He was the first in his family to go to college, and before running for the Senate, he was just your everyday lawyer representing your everyday everyman against your everyday corporate interests. And if he made a million or two in the process, who can blame him?

Perhaps his most exciting campaign promise is what Edwards calls "College for Everyone." Once elected, he would pass legislation offering free tuition for one year of public or community college to every "academically prepared" student. In return, the students must work ten hours a week (not to mention pay for the other three years). He also has some other plans to revamp social services, including a \$2,500 tax credit to poor parents of newborns. To deal with our crumbling health care system, he proposes grants to improve clinics and provide healthcare to all children and help families "struggling to deal with the rising costs of doctors' visits, insurance premiums, prescription drugs and other health care costs."

To end what he calls Bush's "War on Work" Edwards would rely on tax credits to companies who "keep jobs in America," as well as other tax cuts to middle and working class families. How these plans fit in with his calls for "fiscal responsibility" seems unclear. He has also made noises about negotiating trade policies that benefit American workers by enforcing labor and environmental regulations, instead of the free-traders' wet dreams called CAFTA and the FTAA.

On social and cultural issues, Edwards maintains a middle-of-the-road approach. He is a vigorous pro-choicer, advocating a "federal freedom of choice act so that your right to choose is guaranteed and protected no matter what the court does," and opposes most of the anti-abortion policies of the present administration. His attitude towards gay marriage is somewhat less equivocal. While supporting the Massachusetts court decision he stresses that "I personally do not support gay marriage" or civil unions. Ultimately, he is passing the issue off to be decided by the states. Yet he also demands "equal respect and dignity" for gays and lesbians.

With the economy showing some signs of recovery (at least if you define the economy as the Dow Jones Industrial Average), the punditocracy has decreed that security is going to be the Big Issue of the election. Edwards says he supported the war in Iraq and wants "a far stronger commitment to eliminate the threat of chemical, biological, and nuclear weapons." However, he has criticized the way that the war has been handled, saying Bush did not give enough thought to winning the peace. In particular, he is endorsing the standard

plan among the candidates to strengthen the UN and NATO and win back our wary allies. On the home front, the candidate is proposing a new Homeland Intelligence Agency. But as a critic of the PATRIOT act and as one who voted against the confirmation of John Ashcroft, he demands that his new agency "protect the rights of all Americans with new judicial review requirements, new public reporting requirements and a new office of individual liberties."

Environment hasn't been a major issue in Edwards' campaign but once again, he appears to be walking the traditional party line. He helped take on Bush's gutting of the Clean Air Act and opposes drilling in ANWR.

So can he beat Bush? Edwards' strongest argument is that he is from a southern state with some not inconsiderable electoral votes. That, and he has the right skin color, genitalia, bank account and looks nice on the teevee. His blue-collar policies have worked for the party in the past and might do well with people who don't want any of that "nutty radicalism," but want the President to care about the little guy for a change.



John Edwards admits that he is not as well endowed as some of his competition.

A Smorgasboard of Democrats - Written by Woody Litman

Al Sharpton - The Poor Man's Jesse Jackson

Everyone knows Sharpton is the most entertaining of the Democratic contenders. But while his rhetoric is fiery, when it comes down to boring specifics he sometimes seems a little hazy. He is not a policy wonk. We know what Sharpton stands for: No Death Penalty! No More Floridas! A Black President! How exactly we will achieve these goals is not so certain.

For instance, one of Sharpton's pet projects is to pass three new constitutional amendments. These amendments would protect our "Right to Education", "Right to Health Care" and "Right to Vote." But these amendments simply voice our determination as a nation to confront these issues, rather than detail how we will confront them. He hasn't explained which exact health care plan would fulfill our "Right to Health Care," though he has been in favor of single-payer in the past.

If he may be a little vague on details, his broad picture is unmistakable. On most of the issues, Sharpton follows a reliably progressive path. He is against NAFTA and the death penalty, and would decriminalize possession of small amounts of marijuana. He is also strongly in favor of granting either statehood or full voting rights to the residents of Washington D.C.

With regard to foreign policy, Sharpton advocates withdrawal from Iraq. He also wants the US to withdraw from the WTO and establish normal diplomatic relations with Cuba. He has also said that America must stop trying to be a "supercop."

Sharpton's support of gay rights is unequivocal. He strongly supports gay marriage, and says that asking whether he supports it is, "like asking do I support black marriage or white marriage, because the inference of the question is that gays and lesbians are not human beings that can make decisions like any other human being."

On the environment, Sharpton's rhetoric is not quite as definitive. He supports creating jobs by investing in hybrid and electric cars, as well as strengthening the Clean Air and Water Acts.

To those that insist that Democrats must become more centrist in order to win,

Sharpton has this to say: "This centrist stuff doesn't work. Centrist stuff doesn't work because people would rather have an authentic person, even if they're wrong, than to have a cheap imitator. And those that are being abandoned have less reason to come out while you seek to go get somebody that will never come your way. So we've been told, Blacks, Latinos, gays and lesbians, 'Y'all just be invisible, disappear, come and vote for us but we can't be seen with y'all while we go get the white moderate vote.' And for 12 years they been going to get the white moderate vote, and the white moderate vote has gone against them every time."



Sharpton, the sage/ disco king/ presidential nominee.



Howard Dean - HEEEEEEEEEEYAAAAHHHHH

Since Howard Dean became the candidate of choice for anti-war Democrats, he has been branded as aggressive, outspoken and even liberal. True, in today's America opposing the war automatically makes you a hippie-commie-taliban lover but despite what Newsweek may intimate, Dean isn't going to grow his hair out and go vegan anytime soon. As he himself says, "I don't mind being characterized as 'liberal', I just don't happen to think it's true."

The single issue that defines Dean for most people is the Iraq War. He came out against it back when doing so was still a pretty big deal for a mainstream politician. This doesn't necessarily make him the default anti-war candidate, however. Dean has said he, "told the peace people not to fall in love with me." He also supported Gulf War I and every other US intervention between Vietnam and Gulf War II.

One of the main issues that divides Dean from the usual leftist (and what supporters say makes him more palatable to Joe and Edna America) is his fiscal conservatism. Among the Democratic contenders he stresses a balanced budget the most, and would repeal the Bush tax cuts and restrict spending to achieve it.

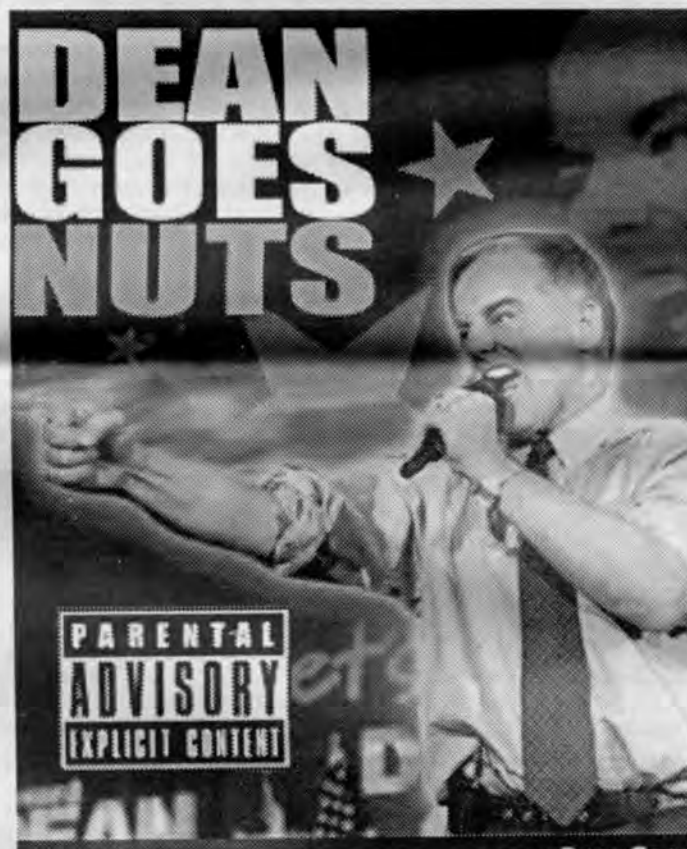
Dean's centrist streak also appears when he talks about welfare. He crows about his time as Governor of Vermont, when he was a "pioneer" of welfare reform.

Until a few years ago Dean was a vocal opponent of the Death Penalty. Now he is a cautious supporter: "The only instances that I support the death penalty are 1) murder of a child, 2) a mass murder like a terrorist, and 3) the shooting of a police officer." He has voiced support for a bill that would provide DNA testing for prisoners on death row.

LGBT issues are brought up a lot by the Dean campaign, since he is the only candidate to have personally signed a bill legalizing civil unions. What isn't brought up as often is the fact that he was practically forced to sign the bill by the Vermont Supreme Court. He said that gay marriage, "makes me uncomfortable, the same as anybody else." And that he would not support a federal law permitting civil unions since, "Marriage isn't the federal government's business."

"The Doctor's" health care plan is to integrate several existing programs and create a federal alternative to private insurance that consumers could buy into. Hopefully, this plan would cover everyone living at or below 185% of the poverty level and all children and young adults at or below 300% of the level. Dean plans to pay for this \$100 billion system by repealing Bush's tax cuts.

Dean has a generally favorable environmental record. As Governor of Vermont, he preserved 1 million acres from development and closed more than 70% of Vermont's leaky landfills. His \$100 billion plan to invest in renewable energy is also a plus. However, he also supports storing nuclear waste at Yucca Mountain.



Wesley Clark - Bomb the World into Sweet Submission

Clark supporters claim that a four-star general would be the only candidate who could beat Bush at his own game- appealing to militaristic patriotism. By nominating Clark, Democrats could turn Bush's strategy of focusing on security back on itself. Who would be better to lead the country in a time of peril: The Supreme Allied Commander who lead NATO in the Balkans, or the man who, by many reports, spent two years AWOL from his Texas Air National Guard unit during the Vietnam War?

The candidate should also have at least a few positions on the issues however, and critics charge that Clark has been slow to push a compelling vision for America. Some wishy-washy interviews he gave just after declaring intent to run support that view. Later however, Clark has been more active in articulating his positions.

Bill and Hillary Clinton are major Clark backers, so I don't think I'm going out on a limb when I guess that a Clark presidency would bring a return to Clinton's policies. To deal with the economy, Clark has a \$100 billion proposal that mostly focuses on creating jobs. The \$100 billion would come from "changes to the Bush Tax plan." By reducing the tax cut to families making over \$200,000 a year, Clark would keep the deficit at its current level. Though this wouldn't immediately reduce the deficit, Clark claims that it would bring back fiscal responsibility and eventually decrease the deficit when the economy gets back on track.

Jobs would be created directly by investing in Homeland security: doing things like building port defenses and expanding the Coast Guard. State and municipal governments would be given money to deal with their fiscal crises, allowing them to increase spending, and businesses would be given tax incentives to create jobs.

The General's health care plan would hopefully provide "health insurance for 31.8 million Americans who are currently uninsured, including all 13.1 million children and college-age Americans." This would be accomplished by automatically insuring everybody younger than 22 and through tax credits for families living below 500% of the poverty level.

Environmental issues have not been at the center of the Clark campaign, and his proposals seem to echo other mainstream Democrats. He asserts that the Clean Air and

Water act would be vigorously enforced in his administration. By promoting renewable energy, he hopes that 20% of the nation's power will come from wind and solar by 2020. A \$2.2 billion Conservation Leadership Trust Fund would provide funding to buy private land and create new national parks. The fund would also go to urban parks and helping rural schools.

Clark says he can save \$2.35 trillion in the next decade by making the government more efficient and demanding that spending proposals must not increase the deficit. He also has a proposal to reduce corporate welfare by creating a commission that would identify loopholes in the tax code.

The media has sometimes portrayed Clark as an anti-war candidate, but in reality Clark supported the Iraq War, while claiming that it could be carried out more effectively. He wrote columns with titles like; "Lets Wait to Attack" and after Baghdad fell, he wrote that Bush and Blair should be "proud of their resolve in the face of so much doubt." This is, after all, the man who led the attack on Yugoslavia, a war that was criticized for disregarding human rights.

If you are looking for a real progressive, Clark probably isn't your man. If you want a return to Clinton-style politics, but in uniform, he just might be the one.



observer

Bush Goes to Mars, Millions Rejoice

A Billion Dollars Here, A Billion Dollars There- Who's Really Counting?

By: Woody Litman

President Bush's new vision for increased space exploration has been met by skepticism from a wide variety of groups. Liberals proclaim that it is just another boondoggle for Halliburton and the aero-space industry. Fiscal conservatives are already nervous about the gigantic deficit and feel queasy about cost estimates that range between \$550 billion and \$1 trillion. According to a poll conducted by the Associated press, more than half of Americans would prefer the money be spent on earth—on domestic programs.

Though the details of Bush's plan are vague, in essence he is calling for a new emphasis on elaborate manned missions. This would be a departure for NASA, which over the past few decades has been concentrating on robotics, such as the recent Spirit expedition to Mars. One stated goal of the new program is for humans to land on the moon again no later than 2020. But this time we would build a permanent station on the moon which could be used "as a stepping stone for more ambitious missions." Namely, a manned expedition to Mars. The shuttle would also be phased out and replaced by a "Crew Exploration Vehicle," which despite the uninspiring name would be capable of venturing outside earth's orbit.

All this comes at a cost of just a couple billion dollars... for now. The administration has said that it will increase NASA's current budget of \$15.4 billion five percent per year for the next three years, and one percent for two years after that. Though the White house has said that NASA's budget will continue to be less than 1% of the entire federal budget, these things have a tendency to get more expensive as time goes on and no one really knows how much the final project will cost.

Critics point out that these moderate expenses represent just the first steps of the programs. Once we actually begin to build the vaunted moon base and new "Crew Exploration Vehicles," costs will go up astronomically. The conservative group Club for Growth estimates that the program will cost \$500 billion over the next twenty-five years. Many believe that the modest budget increases currently proposed by Bush are simply not realistic considering his grand schemes. According to Senator Bill Nelson(D-Florida), a former astronaut, "5 percent a year increases are not going to get us to the moon."

Space geeks and the Administration point out all the cool things space programs have brought humanity: CAT scans, programmable pacemakers, dialysis machines. Not to mention tang and astronaut ice cream. New space technology will doubtless bring us more such wonders, proponents claim.

One sector that will definitely make measurable gains from the "new vision" for NASA is the aero-space industry. All those dollars will be going directly into their coffers. It sounds like they need it. Flight International, the trade magazine of the industry, called the last two years "among the most miserable ever for many parts of the aero-space industry." But things are looking up—the man picked to head the commission planning Bush's space program is the ex-CEO of Lockheed Martin.

What would an analysis of a Bush policy be without a consideration of how it affects the oil industry? Halliburton certainly thinks it has a lot to gain from future Mars exploration. A few years ago, a Halliburton employee named Steve Streich published an article explaining how the oil industry will profit from a mission to Mars. According to Streich, if we ever go to Mars, one of the first activities scheduled will be a massive drilling to determine the geological makeup of the red planet. Not only will this require Halliburton or some other oil company's expertise, but also incredible advances in drilling technology, with the research all paid for by tax-payers. Once acquired, the new technology will allow Halliburton to meet

our fossil fuel needs into the distant future.

It is a possibility that space exploration will bring us a better energy source than oil, however. There has been talk about the massive benefits of mining helium 3 isotopes, known to exist in large quantities on the moon. Helium 3 could be used as fuel in a fusion reactor. Theoretically, such a reactor would be almost perfectly safe and clean. Dr. Harrison Schmitt, a former Apollo 7 astronaut, even stated in the Sydney Morning Herald that he thinks tax payer money won't be necessary for the next moon mission—mining helium 3 will be a profitable venture and pay back all expenses. Skeptics point out that scientists still haven't figured out exactly how a helium 3 reactor would work. Even if they ever do, it would probably require strip mining huge areas of the moon, then heating millions of tons of lunar soil to 1,470 degrees Fahrenheit. For these reasons, the chairman of SpaceDev, a major space-exploration company, calls plans to mine helium 3 "economically unfeasible."

The Bush plan for a permanent base to be established on the moon and then used as a stepping stone to Mars seems a little problematic as well. It would be more cost effective to launch any Mars expedition from a low Earth orbit, rather than making the interplanetary pit stop on the moon. Any mission components are going to have to come from Earth anyway, so why bother with a completely separate stop-over?

Certain science groups have been calling for NASA to abandon manned missions completely and focus on cheaper robotic missions instead. They say unmanned missions result in just as many scientific advances at a fraction of the cost. Since the vehicles never have to come back, costs are effectively halved. The safety factor is also eliminated with robotic missions. But others claim that there is no substitute for having a human mind capable of analyzing and improvising on the spot. They also point out that manned exploration captivates the public imagination in a way that robots do not. People aren't interested seeing pictures of the ozone hole, or what the rocks on Mars are made of. They want to know when they are going to get to take a vacation to the moon and be able to jump around in zero gravity.

That final argument in favor of manned flight indicates at least one positive result of Bush's new emphasis on space exploration. It allows him to use visionary, pioneering rhetoric in an election year. His father also proposed manned expeditions to Mars. That program was quickly defeated in Congress when cost estimate soared into the hundreds of billions. Perhaps Bush the Younger doesn't really expect his proposals to get any further than his dad's— all they have to do is allow him to stand in front of some neat pictures and use impressive scientific words. Once they serve that purpose and he is safely in his second term, they can be quietly scrapped.

There are some in the administration that do not consider space to be just politics, however. A few years ago, Donald Rumsfeld commissioned a report that called for the eventual creation of a U.S. Space Command that would become a branch of the military just like the Army or Navy. The "Report of the Commission to Assess United States National Security Space Management and Organization" calls for the increased militarization of space. It talks of the danger of a "Space Pearl Harbor" and says the President must "have the option to deploy weapons in space to deter threats." So whether or not we actually make it to Mars, you can be sure that plenty tax dollars will be going into orbit.

16 Books, 15 Weeks

How strong is this foundation?

By: Rebecca Giusti and Genevieve Wanucha

"All first year students are required to take the two semester First Year Seminar, which introduces important intellectual, artistic, and cultural ideas that serve as a strong basis for a liberal arts education... These fundamental ideas are presented in the context of a historic tradition and on as broad a scale as feasible within a framework that emphasizes precise, analytical thinking."

So reads the Bard College course catalogue in its description of the required first year curriculum. While this approach is an excellent means of introducing critical texts of the intellectual world, Bard students have recently been voicing specific concerns with the structure of First Year Seminar.

When the program reconvened after winter break, much discussion of last semester's seminar classes took place. While many students had a class which inspired extensive investigation of the question "What is Enlightenment?," others explored a different question in which they took away a vague message, if any, due to patchy and disconnected textual approaches. This wide range of experiences can be attributed to the variance in teaching methods.

We interviewed a wide array of first-year students to see if a consensus opinion regarding the class could be reached. When you ask any first year student about it, a lengthy and opinionated response, often including suggestions for improvement, never fails to follow. Consider what Noah Weston had to say. "I think one of the drawbacks of first year seminar is the result of, what you could call...literary sprawl. We really branch too far out and don't cover everything we intend to."

Another student we interviewed supports Noah's observations. "We spent at the most two days on each book. I never even read half of the books because I didn't need to in order to pass the class. If they're asking us to write critical essays on the books, we really need more time to study and consider them in depth. The goal of first year seminar is to expose students to and interest them in these books and if students don't even read them, then that's an issue."

Concerning more specifically the books themselves, Noah Weston continues his critique. "The books that are prescribed to us should be books we are advised to read, not

required to purchase and then partially read. Unfortunately, that is the consequence of pushing us to get through so much material. I think a lot more coordination is needed between the teachers to ensure that students are not forced to unnecessarily spend their money, because God knows we've definitely dropped enough here. The newest book list is sixteen books, with some professors ordering their students to buy anywhere from one to four others. I have a feeling that we are going to cover about a fourth of those in full. We really were only able to do that in my first year seminar class last semester. These are all great books, but I think it would be more economical for students if they put short works and excerpts on Reserve Web, so maybe we don't have to be the ones paying for bad planning. Sometimes I feel we just have books to fill our bookshelf."

On the issue of the instructors, Noah remarks, "I think the message that first year seminar tries to send is that all these books should be our specialty as students. The problem is finding teachers who have that expertise already to hand down to us. And while it is not bad for them to learn along with us, certainly again it amounts to wasted money for one thing, and also wasted time because some students come away with little from a teacher who can't really offer much more than they get from the book alone."

Other students concurred with Noah. "We didn't have any direction in our class. We never really got interested in our books because our teacher never cared that we even read them," and, "My teacher rarely had anything inspiring or insightful to say about the material because he had never taught it before. Sometimes it felt only as if he was a substitute teacher." Many students tell us they heard their teacher admitting they were not the best one to teach a certain book; certainly students believe that this situation impacted their learning experiences.

In all our interviews, the number one suggestion we heard was to revert to the former First Year Seminar structure, with a more individually tailored second semester, in which students chose a class that focused on a specific facet of an overall theme or thinker. Noah articulates, "If they really want to guide people, if they really want to give people a chance to explore something that appeals to them, then they should allow them to narrow their focus in second semester, as was done in previous years."

Student Government Update

by Andrew Peyton

The folks of the student government would like to extend a warm welcome back. We hope everyone is excited for the spring semester and had a pleasant winter break. In keeping with last semester, we also want to continue trying to make everyone knowledgeable about campus activities and developments.

-Snowflake Drive for Korreena Salerno: On Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday (the 4th, 5th, and 6th) there will be a community fundraiser based on a recent meeting held by the SLC. For \$2 anyone can purchase the materials to make their very own snowflake to be hung up in the Campus Center. All proceeds will go to assist Korreena in her time of need. Please come out and show your support.

-Budget Forum: The beloved Budget Forum will be held on Wednesday night, February the 11th at 8pm in Kline. Come join the fun as Bard students help decide how funds will be distributed to student-run clubs. Guaranteed to be a memorable evening.

-Student Activities Fee Increase: Last semester there was a big push to increase the activities fee so clubs could sponsor more events on campus. The campaign was successful and, beginning with next semester, we hope it will be obvious to everyone as clubs sponsor more and more fun activities to bring our community together.

-Finals Week and 24hr Privileges: Also last semester, there was much effort to

establish a finals week at Bard. The end result was that it needs to be investigated. In the mean time, we intend to work this semester to open up the Library 24 hours a day during the week of mid-terms and finals.

-Laundry Services: The final piece of information carrying over from last semester is the attempt to terminate the contract with CoinMach, our laundry service provider. While the effort to find a new company was unsuccessful, the contract is being renegotiated and the area head has renewed his effort to provide us with excellent services. Additionally, approximately 20 new machines were installed to replace old, out-dated, and busted machines. Please be vigilant about reporting malfunctioning machines to your PC or directly to B&G.

As always, please feel free to contact us!
If you have any questions, comments, or suggestions,
write an e-mail to either:
centralcom@bard.edu or slc@bard.edu.

Thanks a bunch!

Men's Basketball, Vassar and the Apocalypse

Bourgeois Bard Enters The 6th Gate of Hell

By: Chris Konker

"Vassar got me PREGNANT!" "Vassar is a REPUBLICAN!" Yes, all the banners were waving, the magnificent Bard step team was impressing, and all the stops were pulled out for a rowdy and electrifying battle between the better-than ever Bard men's basketball team and the Brewers from hated Vassar College, making a historic return to Annandale.

It had the setup of a classic – one matchup, middle of the season, two teams that aren't in each other's conference, much less at the same level (Vassar is supposedly better). C'mon, they may be only 45 minutes away, but I think we play them for one main reason—this is a killer rivalry. Some merely dream, while others vow, but the occasion of Bard students invading and taking over Vassar appears to be inevitable, and we definitely had the Brewers' attention on Tuesday.

Enough hype. Give all of the credit to our inspired, competitive guys' team. Having been defeated by 36 points at Vassar last year, Bard gave them a serious fight, losing 50-67, due almost entirely to disparities in strength and depth of talent.

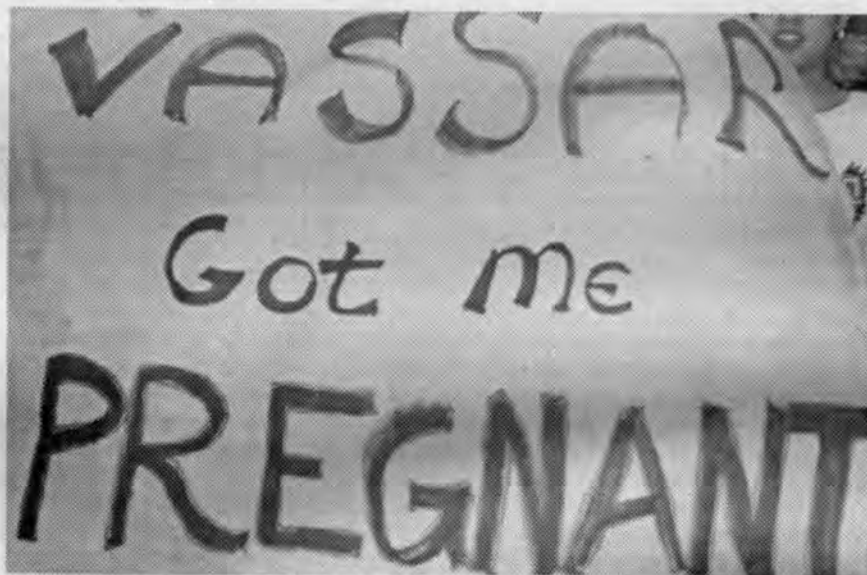
Speaking with co-captain and forward Adam Turner before the game, it was evident that this game carried a lot of weight. "This is a huge statement for us that if we can get this win, we've kinda arrived and we've had a couple games where we've almost gotten a win over a bigger team in a bigger conference...if we can put it together and beat Vassar tonight, that would be huge for us."

The game began. The Vassar defense was stifling from beginning to end, and despite solid contention from Bard defenders, the Brewers had a keen eye for the hoop and connected on a barrage of three-pointers. On offense, point guard Drew McCormack plowed through a full-court press for the entirety of the game. During the first half and part of the second, the Raptors used each possession to move the ball around the perimeter to keep the game at a slow pace. Typically, the ball would go into the paint to forward Josef Woldense, who, unfazed by the physicality of the Vassar post-players, proceeded to drain jump shots from near and far, even while hobbling most of the game with knee aggravation. Turner, rather than posting up, often penetrated to make plays on the drive. Although he had a slow start, he put on a shooting show in the second half, going 5-5, with several three pointers and assists. It was disappointing that co-captain Collin Orcutt and McCormack did not try to take their defenders off the dribble more often. Orcutt seemed to settle for jumpers, while McCormack had a perfect shooting percentage, but with merely two shots.

All of this made for an interesting game, but the combination of the atmosphere in Stevenson and the intensity overload of the last five minutes made the game unforgettable for both good and bad surprises. Something in the air shifted during halftime. The steppers rocked everybody's world. Then as the second half began, lights in the gym began to turn on and off, as if the gym was beginning to wilt under the weight of the occasion. Towards the very end, the controlled pace of the game went out the window. The possessions shifted faster than we could turn our heads. All of a sudden, Collin Orcutt was everywhere. He was getting steals, diving on the ground, slashing to the rim, getting fouled, and yelling something at Vassar muscle man Will Kieffer that forced his teammates to restrain him. I

think another light went off. On a Vassar fast break with 30 seconds to go, the recipient of the pass turned around abruptly and crashed full impact into a motionless Adam Turner, making what was undoubtedly the bravest and most regrettable decision to take a charge I have ever seen in many years of basketball. With the game totally out of reach and with 30 seconds left, Turner put his body on the line big time, and I'd be amazed if he played again this season.

What was not said but emphasized, both in the pre-game conversation and in the game that followed, was the pride that this squad has in their abilities and identity. It is a team of, as Turner noted, "good role players." History will show that this is a Bard team for the ages, as McCormack, Woldense, and Turner have each set Bard records for assists, blocks, and points scored, respectively. Coach Chris Wood is also on his way to best winning percentage in the school's history. However, what was proved beyond a shadow of a doubt by the end of the game was that, with co-captains Orcutt and Turner as rallying points, this is a team of warriors that put up an inspiring fight against a Vassar squad that wasn't making any mistakes. It might not have been the big arrival game that Turner had hoped for, but if that's true, the Raptors fooled everybody in the gym that night. I never heard the final buzzer go off either. Bard and Vassar left the court with 30 seconds left, the crowd stunned silent and cringing, the light above the Raptors' hoop burnt out, and blood left on the court. Until next year.



Those rich deadbeat bastards.

Women's Basketball Cruises Against Hampshire

Smart kids crush the crackheads

By: Chris Konker

Coming off its biggest win of the season against Marymount College on Monday, the women's basketball team looked to bring that momentum into Stevenson on Thursday in looking for its first winning streak of the season. With a balanced scoring attack, and alert defense, the Raptors made short and efficient work of the Hampshire Black Sheep, defeating them 68-30.

The Raptors, 3-9, have been struggling to establish consistency in attitude with six of the ten players on the roster being first-year players. All of their losses have been by double figures, which co-captain Jordan Caress attributed to a losing attitude brought on by occasions of surrendering large runs of points.

The game began with the Raptors and Black Sheep matching each other point for point until they were tied at 10. It was exciting early, thanks to Claire Byars diving out of bounds and into the visitors' bench for the ball. The point guard for Hampshire connected for two three-pointers off the backboard, and the audience started to wonder aloud how far the Sheep would go in the game with luck. They went no farther...literally. Led by spot-on jump shooting by Caress and co-captain Kamun Chan, Bard's lead became five, then ten, then twenty, leaving Hampshire in the dust – stuck on ten points for nearly the duration of the first half.

At halftime, Bard led, 34-14, and throughout the rest of the game, the pace remained to Bard's advantage. The entire team came together, and statistically, every play-

er made an impact. Several first-year players had impressive numbers. Hannah Timmons led the Bard fast break on a rampage in the second half, finishing with 21 points and 2 steals. Yolanda Mendoza had a great defensive impact in the post, grabbing 7 rebounds. Melissa Kutner had a perfect scoring percentage in the paint, with 8 points. Chan, a junior, also had 8 points along with 2 steals. Caress, the only senior on the team, had a sustained impact on the game in a number of ways. She punished the defense when she was left open, provided solid defense of her own, led fast breaks, and most importantly, played unselfish basketball. She had 18 points, 4 assists, 3 steals, and a block.

Before the game, Caress expressed confidence in this year's team and its versatility. "There is so much talent right now. And the time when it clicks is just when everybody is so obviously working together and understanding each other's strengths." From the stands, it really was obvious that the Bard Raptors play great team basketball. Most impressive to me was that they were very patient in sharing the ball and finding the highest-percentage shot, which, in this game, meant either a wide-open look, or a shot from close proximity to the hoop. They played with a lot of trust. All available players saw extended time and scored at least 4 points.

In the cushion of a two-game winning streak, the Raptors are looking to surge and keep the positive momentum. Here's hoping they keep the winning attitude, and run n' gun themselves to subsequent victories.

A New Program For Young Whipper-Snappers

Those who can, do; those who can't, teach

By: Joyce Li

The recently instituted Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) program, Bard's newest graduate program, has been hailed as an innovative new step in the field of secondary and post-secondary education. The yearlong program aims to immerse graduate students in a specific academic discipline while integrating it with studies in the field of education. "This is a bold new idea," says Mark Halsy, the acting Associate Director of the program. "The program is based on the premise that segregating teacher training from the disciplines being taught is an unnecessary distinction."

The philosophy behind the MAT program is to revitalize classroom education by focusing on how teachers are being trained, with the belief that the way educators teach reflects how they themselves were taught. "Teaching is an art," says Halsy. "It's been reduced to a pseudo-science...but we want to get back to a clinical approach."

The MAT program has an integrated curriculum, which demands that students work and research both in their elected area of academic focus as well as in the field of secondary education. At the end of the program, students will receive a masters of Arts degree and a teaching certificate in adolescent education in a specific subject. "Students will have graduate-level understanding of their academic field by the completion of the program," says Halsy. The objective behind integrating the two focuses is to help students understand the processes and nuances of learning a subject, with the idea that it will enable them to teach it more effectively: "We want to blur the artificial distinction between teacher and student."

The MAT program also hopes to reform and improve the quality of the field

experience students will receive. In most standard Masters programs, student teacher training is often conducted in isolation, with little or no communication between students, teachers, or program faculty. The program has formed partnerships with several local schools, with the idea that local schools, MAT faculty, and student teachers can all benefit from a communicative and concerted relationship. Students will work in the classrooms of local public schools in two 10-week blocks with teachers that are already familiar with the objectives of the MAT program, and will conduct original research under their supervision.

The program is structured around course work in pedagogy, six graduate-level courses in a student's chosen field, intensive student-teacher training, and research projects in both the pedagogical field as well as the chosen academic discipline. The program also offers a strong advisory system, where students meet in small groups weekly with two MAT faculty advisors, one from their discipline, and one from the education core.

The long-term goal of the MAT program is to change the form of public secondary education. "We hope that our projection of student-teacher relationship becomes a model of interest nationally," says Halsy. The program currently offers teaching certificates in English, mathematics, physics, or history, and will expand to include other fields such as art, biology, chemistry, foreign languages, and music. The program also hopes to offer summer training or seminars for certified teachers already in classrooms.

Join the staff of The Observer. Fight the good fight.

Next meeting is Thursday, 2/12

in The Observer office, in the basement of Tewks.

As always, e-mail observer@bard.edu if you have any questions or whatever.

Civil War Erupts on Bard Campus

By: Laura Bomyea

Aren't we all supposed to be pacifist-hippie-whimps?

"To arms!" cried one brave captain as he and his troops began launching their attack on the invading army. "Alle! Alle! Archers Fire!" A rush of snowballs flew from the roof of Bourne, striking the snarling mass of North Campus Residents attempting to infiltrate the toaster from below. And thus, the battle began.

We waited quietly in our foxholes, surrounded by the thickness of night. Anticipating an attack under covered darkness, a wall had been constructed in front of Bourne's common room window, and anxious South Campus Residents had begun stockpiling ammunition. Word of a Northern attack had been circulating for days. When the first snowball was lofted, the South was prepared for war.

Southerners tore at the wall, pushing and clawing at the snow until they created openings large enough to accommodate their snarling visages. The defending army had already taken their posts and snow began flying through the night air. "Moderate this!" one rebel yelled as he launched a tightly packed snowball. "Go back to the land of decadence, you infidels!" cried another.

In the pitch-black midnight hour, the warring factions lost sight of their comrades and began furiously hurling snow with reckless abandon. Loyalties were forgotten and in the confusion many brave soldiers found themselves firing at friendly targets, standing next to the opposing forces that occasionally cried "Cruger!" "Die South!" or "Help me, help me, I live in Keen!"

One brave individual ran by me screaming "North Campus smells like Vassar!" and hurling his snowballs with all the might he could muster. Suddenly, spotlights flooded the sky from the roof of Obreshkove. Someone yelled "Get Shelov!" and one paladin

ran by holding a small ball of snow to a bleeding nose.

The quad was filled with residents throwing snow, knocking each other over and yelling. Soon security officials burst onto the roofs of the toasters, breaking up the battle and taking ID cards. The warriors on the rooftops were forced to surrender. Gradually, the raging tumult receded and the chilly Northerners retreated to the forests.

Sitting with a group of weary soldiers at the end of the war, I heard many of them celebrating their victory. Indeed, one warrior proclaimed himself the sole victor in battle and issued an ultimatum on that point. Recalling the madness, he told me "They fucking dragged me into the snow to take my post office box shield... Basically we proved that if a pimp were involved in a snow ball fight, he would look like me."

Those that I interviewed asserted a strong and decisive victory for the defending Southerners. One decorated hero asserted "South campus whooped their asses, drove them into the ground and comported itself most admirably." Another weary soldier wandered through on his way outside saying, "Let's stop making war and drink beer."

Josh Klein-Khun spoke of the Southern victory with great pride and admiration. "Tonight proved once again that the South will rise against northern aggressors," he told me. "Tonight, we took a stand for Southern pride and valor and honor. We beat back the Yankees again, and showed them that Dixie is still not to be messed with."

He smiled happily as we all kicked back and shared our war stories. While the great snowball fiends massaged their war wounds, someone observed a really good smell. "Something smells really good," they said. "It's my feet," Josh replied, and grinned as he headed back to Steinway.

Students Avoid Boredom At Any Cost

Intersession is, like, pretty cool

By: Jesse Morgan Hills

The most commonly asked question of the past couple weeks was most likely, "so, how was your intersession?" The most common response being, "you know, it was, like, pretty cool." When the author of this article heard this ubiquitous question, he asked himself, "what really happens during intersession?"

Bard lore claims that Intersession was initially conceived in the old days to save money on heating bills during the cold month of January. This may be true because, as anyone who spent his or her break on the East Coast can surely attest to, the weather can get brutally cold this time of year. Yet due to tradition or some other unknown force, the month long break from school has persisted through the years, even as Bard's financial state has markedly improved.

On the last days of the semester, the campus rapidly transforms into a ghost town. Most students are packing up what they will need for the break, while others are still desperately finishing projects for a class. Then there is Christmas, Hanukah and New Years to deal with. After all that fun stuff, we all still have three weeks of vacation time. By the time we all get back to school, anything cool you might have done during the beginning of January is old news. Nobody cares what you did for New Years. I can hardly remember what I did myself. When I do think back to the month away from school, all I can come up with is the word 'boring.'

Now let's get back to the question at hand, "How was your intersession?" Two individuals interviewed for this article reported getting sick with strep throat. That sucks. Others traveled to Puerto Rico, Santa Cruz, Mississippi, Prague, (not too shabby), and to their respective homes for the holidays. If anyone really cares, I spent mine at home with my parents in New Hampshire, while just managing to get a few hours of work in a week at a nearby restaurant. Not everyone was able to get jobs, as it is hard to find employment for just a month. One junior from New York City remarked, "I tried really hard to find a job, but it was really competitive." Jobs were certainly hard to find this winter in the sluggish economy, but the bottom line just might be that "the break is too short to have a job and take it seriously." When I asked this junior if she would prefer a longer break to get a job, she replied: "No." The only reason she had been looking for a job was because, "after two weeks your vacationing is over, and you got to find something to do."

The month long break for seniors was a fine time to get a portion of work done on their senior projects. For eight dollars a day, a senior working on his or her final project was

permitted to live in another student's room in one of the Old Toasters. One senior that stayed for intersession stated that there were a few people in each of the Old Toaster dorms. She got some work done, but not as much as she had hoped. The amount of work that various seniors got done for senior projects this break was a mixed bag. Some got a great deal of work out of the way, while some reported not accomplishing anything.

As I randomly questioned people that I met on how their intersection was, Adam Janos responded with the most enthusiasm about his break. He and a friend from high school traveled to Thailand for a three-week excursion of sight seeing and exploring. Between the two of them, they had only spent about ten hours at most buying the plane tickets and planning the trip. On the long plane ride to their destination they began to look through a travel guide called "The Lonely Planet" for ideas on where to go. I was skeptical that it was possible to travel to another country with such little planning ahead of time, but Adam assured me that "you really don't need to know anything.... If it is a safe country and friendly to foreigners, that's all you need." If you are open-minded and good-spirited, then the people there are very warm and friendly in return. Adam recalls one of his more memorable nights when "people were giving me drinks and throwing their arms around me."

He travels to experience culture and meet new people, but tends to avoid the wild "spring-breakish" party scenes. He notes that partying in Bangkok is "totally nuts." If nature is your thing, the country also offers beautiful rainforests and mountains. I asked Adam if he thought that his trip had been long enough. "It was a huge epic thing, but I was ready to go back to school. Leaving was hard to do, and I was crying a little bit on the last night," he said.

Intersession can only be what you make of it. We get this month off in the middle of two semesters and people choose to do a variety of things. The length of the break feels just right to me and to most people that I talked to. Even though some people may be bored out of their minds by the end of it, the break offers us something different that we can't get while we are at school. It's a little peace, quiet and an open book of possibilities. Whether you went on an amazing trip or sat around your house, smoked a lot of pot and watched The Sopranos, I'd say either direction is perfectly fine. I only ask that we all try to say something interesting when asked, "How was your break?"

You Cannot Die From Starvation

And some other fun fat facts

By: Caleb Morfit

Let me start this article by saying that I am certainly no expert in the areas of nutrition or personal training. Everything that I do know comes from reading books and working out heavily for the last two years. The information contained within this article specifically comes from a book by Covert Bailey called "Smart Exercise." I trust this book, and so I pass the information that it holds onto you with the hope that you can benefit from it in whatever way you see fit. I do not advocate trying to lose weight to squeeze into those supermodel pants. Personally, I prefer athletic girls who look like they could kick ass if it came right down to it.

Fact 1: Everything that you eat can be turned into fat when eaten in excess. This does not mean that you should limit yourself to 1 piece of broccoli from now on. It only means that you should not think of fat as being contained only within certain "evil" foods.

Fact 2: Fat is the main source of energy for your body. 70% of the calories that your body uses to power your muscles comes from conversion of stored fat into energy.

Fact 3: When people stop being active, one of the first systems to go is the enzymes that converts fat into energy. This means that if you stop moving for a month and then get on the treadmill for an hour, most of the energy will come not from fat, but from sugar within the body. In order to get back in shape you must exercise consistently for a few weeks to retrain your body to burn fat.

Fact 4: The quickest way to lose fat while training is through aerobic exercise. For the

sake of simplicity, aerobic exercise will be defined as any exercise that allows constant oxygen flow to your muscles. When your muscles do not receive enough oxygen, they are unable to burn fat and will only be able to partially burn sugar. Burning only sugar for too long will create that build up of lactic acid that is the source of the phrase "feeling the burn." If you are trying to burn fat you should perform your exercises at a level that makes you breath heavily without gasping like a fish. Being able to carry on a stilted conversation is usually a sign that you are running at the right speed.

Fact 5: Lactic acid can be a good thing. When you "feel the burn" you are burning the sugar in your system, which leads to a firming of the muscles. When people lose a lot of weight without integrating anaerobic (oxygen deficient) exercise, they are usually left with a lot of loose muscle, which tends to leave you looking like grandma.

Fact 6: It is impossible to starve to death. In order for fat to be converted to energy in the body, it requires a lot of sugar. When people stop eating, they lose all of the incoming sugar so that their body is forced to convert protein into sugar. Since protein is necessary for the creation of immune system antibodies, if enough of it is used to activate the fat, then the body becomes susceptible to diseases death becomes inevitable. Even someone who dies weighing 75 pounds still has 10-15 ponds of fat in their body. Because fat is the primary source of energy in the body, this means that it is impossible for people to ever starve to death. Unbelievable, but true.

The Werd From Berd...

The BERD staff strives to keep Bard clean and green at all levels. Currently, one of the most exciting projects involves the Bard vehicles that use diesel fuel. BERD proposed that the trucks switch over to using Biodiesel fuel.

Switching over to Biodiesel will yield fantastic benefits for the college and the surrounding community. The campus vehicles currently using conventional diesel fuel are using up 11,000 total gallons a year; the Shuttle uses 6,000 gallons a year on its own. The U.S. EPA has approved this alternative fuel- which when combined at 20% with regular diesel cuts down air emissions of direct pollutants by 35%. All this is done with no harm to the performance of the vehicles, nor will it negatively affect maintenance of them.

BERD is very excited about this project and holds future plans to switch some of the heating fuel used in campus buildings over to similar vegetable-based substitute fuel. This would even further diminish the amount of damaging gas emissions and overall air pollution that negatively affect us all and the world we live in.

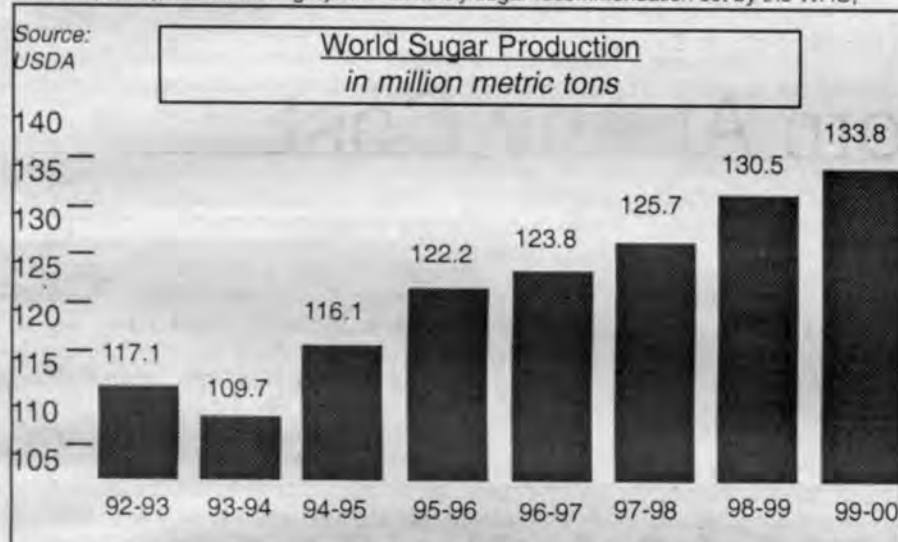
For more information or to share your ideas for a greener campus, please contact BERD at ext. 7868, or at recycle@bard.edu. Be sure to check out BERD's Salvaged Office Supplies [S.O.S.] room located in the basement of Brook House, behind Residence Life.

Fruit For Thought

By: Maxwell Leer

Perusing the global news last week, I discovered an article written in the Guardian that inspired this article. The Guardian reported an announcement by the British government of a new state-sponsored program of 77 million pounds for providing all children under the ages of seven with free fruit every day at school. A pilot scheme using lottery funding is being directly transferred to the price of distributing some 440 portions a year to roughly 2 million children in about 18,000 state schools in England. The program is part of a movement by the government to improve public health and tackle a growing problem throughout the developed world: Obesity.

Although it is quite useful to target fast food giants (i.e. Ronald McDonald) who manufacture pisspoor food products on a mass scale, it is also important to focus on those veiled characters amidst the producer skyline inhibiting progressive Health reform. Of the agents responsible for trumping a global movement to decrease malnutrition, American sugar barons are among the most dangerous. Marion Nestle, the chair of the Department of Nutrition & Food studies at New York University, commented that, "because sugary foods often replace more healthy foods, diets high in sugar are almost certainly contributing to osteoporosis, cancer, and heart disease. It's time that the foods label informed customers of a foods contribution to a recommended limit for added sugars." In reality, the real impediment to "limiting" sugar intake has not been the lack of information on product labels. The primary agents failing to promote lower sugar intake levels reside in the Bush administration, which is placing the interests of powerful sugar moguls ahead of the battle against obesity. It is as a result of the Bush administration's inability to place reason above greed, that they now face attacks from the World Health Organization (WHO), for not abiding by the 10% daily sugar recommendation set by the WHO.



Whether or not this international challenge to the 10 % sugar intake recommendation would actually affect developing countries' economic success is up for debate. Brazil only manufactures 45 % of their total sugarcane crop into sugar, while the remainder of sugarcane is converted into fuel alcohol (1 ton of sugarcane = 1.2 barrels of petroleum). A legal gasoline content requirement of roughly 1/4 fuel alcohol allows Brazilians to save on petroleum imports, overriding

the social benefits derived from revenues of sugar exports. Back to the issue of the WHO report, what is of interest here is US opposition. Why? Say the American sugar industry suffers losses in revenue; the overall standard of living in this country would not suffer to nearly the same degree as Cuba's economy, where sugar cane is one of the only key cash crops being exported.

Health Professor Kaare Norum, leader of the WHO's fight against diet-related diseases, has been arguing with US Health Secretary Tommy Thompson, who defends the US sugar intake of 25 % of daily calories. Norum claims that in failing to adopt the WHO blueprint to combat obesity the US is making the health of millions of young Americans hostage to fortune (i.e. American sugar beet farmers, alcohol manufacturers, etc). Although the sugar industry is one of the most protected US farm sectors whose refined sugar price is more than twice that of the world market price, it is interesting that the source of defense for the 25 % guideline is not the farmers. The Department of Health is backed by "scientific fact." The Department's 25 % figure is supposedly based on a report issued by the Institute of Medicine; however in April of 2003 Harvey Fineberg (president of the Institute) wrote Thompson explaining that the report must have been misinterpreted, for it makes no recommendation of sugar intake.

Threats imposed by high sugar intake include its direct links with obesity, cardiovascular illness, as well as diabetes. Norum writes, "Obesity rates have risen so that now one in three Americans bears the burden of very high health risks associated with this condition, with the poorest and marginal communities worst affected." An estimated 60 % of disease worldwide is now due to cardiovascular illness, which causes 47 % of deaths. More than half of Americans are overweight, and in some states, including Texas, nearly one-third of the population is classified as obese. It is obvious that there are sketchy ties between the government and the sugar lobby when Thompson is sending Bill Steiger (godson of George Bush Sr.) as his representative to meetings for the Department of Health. Even more problematic is Steiger's argument at these meetings: "there is no evidence of a correlation between selling junk food to children and obesity." Go get em' Billy!

Considering current consumption levels are 9.8 million short tons of sugar each year in America, it is obvious that curbing sugar-intake will take time. Yet it stands as more obvious to me that there a number of measures that can be taken on a national level to de-emphasize unnecessary consumption levels for sugar, and instead advocate healthier sources of energy (fruits and vegetables for example). Discussing the country's recently adopted fruit program for children, British Health secretary John Reid commented, "I am not one of those who believes that you can run about ordering people and passing laws. We should try and do it by persuasion." Persuasion and not coercion is a very smart way to raise Health issues, and I applaud Mr. Reid in this decision.

Walking through the hallway of my former high school two weeks ago I saw vending machines stocked with Skittles, Chocolate, Doritos & Pop. It is unfortunate that at my High School the government hasn't intervened as the British government has on regulating "commercial-free areas" throughout its 1,500 secondary schools, carrying over 4,000 vending machines. Rather than staring at vending machine panels caked in corporate iconography, students will instead see panels designed by the Coca-Cola Company with pictures of children playing in cityscapes. Atop the shift in icons, healthier drinks such as water and juices have been slowly replacing Pop products. Taking such small steps in health reform should not be such a difficult task in this country, especially when it concerns children. So...I guess its only proper for one to ask: What the Hell is going on?

Election Analysis: "Electability" = Timidity

By: Ryan Doxtader

Dated Dean, Married Kerry

It has become pretty clear in the past couple of weeks that Howard Dean will have to overcome enormous challenges, most notably the mainstream media and a reluctant electorate, to win the nomination for President from the Democratic Party. It seems obvious that he will not attain the nomination, but I'd like to focus on the positive results of his campaign effort. It appears that he pulled the supposedly "electable" (which is not a real word, by the way) Sen. John Kerry (D-Mass.) to the left by energizing the progressive faction of the party for his election bid. There are countless disillusioned Americans who are horrified by Bush's so-called "War on Terror," his quite out in the open bias for the wealthy few, his utter disregard of environmental issues, and so on and so forth. Kerry, being less repulsive to the ruling and middle classes than Dean, and being one hell of an opportunistic son of a bitch, is reaping the rewards of Dean's efforts. Kerry sees that the coast is clear to be a lot more left-wing than he had been, and it now appears that he is going to steal Dean's thunder.

It's a shame that Kerry and the rest of the mainstream candidates couldn't wear their beliefs on their sleeves since the beginning, but you have to be cautious if you want to win the general election. You can't be too critical of things, can't bring up the real aims of our foreign policy, can't bring up how your own party sold out in a big way in the 90's (well...because they support that, but never mind). In other words, the Democratic candidates must be impotently oppositional. That is, until some loony shows up (Yeeeeeeeeeaagghhh!) and brings these things up in a more or less open fashion. Then it becomes cool to have these things come out of your own mouth. Like the truth and stuff. The Congressional Candidates (Kerry, onceupon-a-time Lieberman, goodriddance Gephardt and lastly or thirdly, Sen. John Schmedwards) are simply used to being bullied by the Bush Administration and bowing to conventional wisdom about our Foreign Policy aims and the resultant Terrorist threats.

Anyways, now that Kerry has given himself permission to indulge in a little progressiveness - because he will benefit politically - things are taking a more positive turn. A positive turn in the hell-world of our political reality. That reality is not a pretty one. Our candidates must be as lifeless as possible, they can't tap into any disgruntled emotion provoked by an unacceptable picture of greed, reckless use of power, terrible economic inequality, and the fact that our "President" is a fucking moron. The masses must be kept sedate, uninformed (and it's cousin, misinformed), and distracted so that they don't threaten privilege. Our mainstream media, being a reflection of the concerns of the powers that be, works overtime to marginalize those views which do not serve power interests. If the New York Times doesn't have to mention the name Dean, it won't. At this point the Times just skips from Kerry to Edwards to Clark, failing to men-

tion number 2 (Dean's got 174 delegates to Kerry's 412 as of Sunday, Edwards has 116) because Number 2 is just a little too... Yeeeeeeeeeaagghhh!

The fact that Dean's campaign will probably die from his unfortunate ejaculation (and his near bankruptcy, admittedly) does not speak well for our media and our political culture. Journalistic standards are nowhere to be found...nowhere to be found. Take a look at FOX NEWS, where the commentators are interviewing the candidates in the most disgusting fashion possible. "Democratic Nominee X, isn't it true that you are doing terribly in the polls, the other candidates said this, that and the other thing about yo mamma, you're snorting oxycontin, you're gonna drop out of the race, and planning to go home and shoot yourself in the head with a double-barrel shotgun?" (I'm embellishing here, but only a bit). Granted, Fox represents the most repulsive section of the spectrum, but the other major news outlets are also carrying on that ugly policy of marginalizing the candidates that are most unacceptable to the mainstream (Dean and Kucinich... gotta make 'em disappear). It's just their persistent, obsessive habit of focusing on how bad Dean's doing - if they even mention his name - that's so revolting.

Anyway, it's obvious now that this year is going to be about endless pain and endless heartache and chest pain and eating endless rounds of political shit sandwiches and picking the guy who really sucks and is not who he says he is but still... we must pick the guy who's the least terrible. Or some shit. It may be that we have to get behind Kerry this year because he hath been ordained "electable" by the electorate and, "it is what it is," we all chorus helplessly. I just hope that he absorbs enough of the force from Dean to be as "effective" as possible against Bush.

Also, - and I say this just in passing cause it's so fucking obvious - this election is very, very special, being as it is that Bush wasn't elected and is carrying out very dangerous and reckless policies - so there needs to be a very powerful message in the campaign of the opposing Democrat. The message must be so powerful that even if Bush wins, it will be quite clear to those in the mainstream of political thought that this was SOMETHING THAT SHOULD HAVE NEVER HAPPENED. Whoever wins the Democratic Nomination must necessarily transcend the normal rhetoric, because our situation demands it. With this in mind it is very disappointing to see people, candidates, and the media talking as if this campaign is just another normal presidential campaign and blah-di-blah blah. Very disappointing, because it means our system is in perfect working order - people are cynical and feeling powerless. Thank God someone like Dean came along and shook things up. Not without divine intent...

If You Want More....

Compiled By: Ethan Porter and Ryan Doxtader

We can't offer everything in The Observer about the upcoming election. We try, but we fail. For more extensive coverage, check out the following articles/miscellany.

Article: "Sleeping With The GOP," by Wayne Barrett

Link: <http://www.villagevoice.com/issues/0405/barrett.php>

Believe it or not, Reverend Sharpton is being underwritten by right-wingers who intend to split the left and keep the Presidency in their hairy palms. Believe it.

Article: "Strong Dems," by Andrew Sullivan

Link: http://www.andrewsullivan.com/main_article.php?artnum=20040201

The grouchy gay Republican actually thinks that the Dems have a chance. Of course they do.

Article: "John Kerry's America," by William F. Buckley Jr.

Link: <http://www.nationalreview.com/flashback/wfb200402040837.asp>

Buckley and crew haven't liked John Kerry since 1971. What an honor for him: Who said he wasn't a real liberal?

Article: "Why Bush Picked Russert," by Howard Kurtz

Link: <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/nation/columns/kurtzhoward/>

Georgie gears up for re-election by getting up early on a Sunday morning and fielding softball questions. Now if only he'd give an unscripted press conference.

Article: "Democrats See Michigan as Test Run for November," by E.J. Kessler

Link: <http://www.forward.com/issues/2004/04.02.06/news6a.html>

Wolverines and car manufacturers will decide our fate.

Link: www.Deangoesnuts.com

Mind-blowing remixes of the "I Have A Scream" speech. Check out the "Hey Y'all" remix under "mixes." Every candidate should have his own Outkast song.

2003: A Wallet Full of Ticket Stubs

By: Henry Casey

The first movie that I wish I had reviewed this past year is *The Revolution Will Not Be Televised*. It's about the 2002 revolution under Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez, and the disturbing influence and manipulation that was created by the major media companies. What is truly revolutionary about this film is the fact that all the footage of Chavez, his cabinet, and the events that took place was not taken from a recreation or stock footage, but from documenters who were eyewitnesses to it all. This is a topic that the U.S. Government would rather not see the light of day because it implicates them in trying to take Chavez out. This might have played into the fact that there was NO PRESS at all for this movie. It was only by chance that I found out that it was playing in NYC over Thanksgiving break. This is a movie that you have to make an effort to find, but trust me when I tell you that your effort in finding it will be worth every second of this important film.

Now that I've talked about that hidden gem, I'd like to go into depth on what I like to call "the fall of cinema in the west", or "The Rise Of Regal Cinemas". This chain has taken over theatres that were once good like Hoyts or United Artists. The movie theatre, which used to be the last place where commercials played, is now a place for the other forms of pop culture to be sold and hyped. And it's not like the artists being pushed through the celluloid are decent at all. That would be a waste of the record label's money, so instead we are shown music videos from shitty singers like Ashanti, Rachel Farris and some horrible new wave of the Spice Girls called Bond. In addition, when you buy a drink, you're gonna get a really shitty lid with a mini cd in it, and the lid falls off quite easy too. All of this bullshit takes place before the movie hits the screen, and since you have to arrive at the theatre so early to make sure the feature has not sold out, you're forced to sit there and endure it all.

Another thing I'd like to talk about is *Pirates of the Caribbean: The Curse of the Black Pearl*. This was advertised to make me think it was going to be the worst movie of the year, and instead it was a funny, exciting and very well done movie. It was the return of



Johnny Depp as "the man so hot that that even straight men will admit is attractive." Its effects extended beyond itself as thanks to the exposure it gave Keira Knightly, gave the underground hit "Bend It Like Beckham" a second run with much more advertising and a chance to be seen.

Finally I end with my Top 5 of the year.

1. *Kill Bill Vol. 1*: a experience of pure enjoyment where I was left wanting more and will be granted that wish soon this year. Best blood ever.

2. *American Splendor*: I didn't get to review this movie but I thought it was the best response to the "Comic Books As Movies" Phenomenon that gave us shit like *Underworld*. I'm going as Harvey Pekar on Halloween when I have to go with my kids someday.

3. *Cold Mountain*: no other movie this year held my attention the way this masterpiece did. It got me to believe in Renee Zellweger again and increased that amazing streak Jude Law has been on.

4. *Lost In Translation*: a quiet simple movie that affected me like very few others have. I drove home in silence, just thinking about the sophomore sensation Sophia Coppola created. Bill Murray is a comic god who proves that his dramatic role in *Rushmore* was nothing close to a fluke. Give that man an Oscar.

5. *Return of the King*: I apologize for my ripping the *LotR* series in my *Kill Bill* review. This was actually an amazingly good movie, an epic filling 3.5 hours and even though it felt like that much time, I didn't care. Here's to *Kill Bill 2*, and more cries of solidarity at the local theatres.



SUPER BOWL 39: ONE TIT-BIT AT A TIME

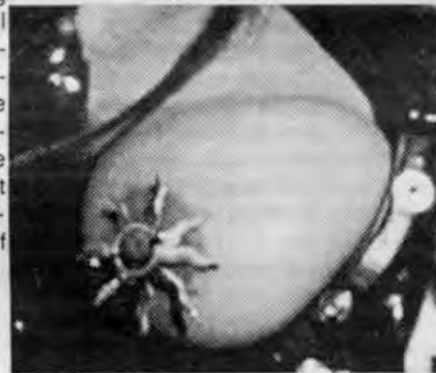
By Lacy Post

Was that this year's Super Bowl halftime show or was it another *Girls Gone Wild*: Cancun commercial? Whether you found yourself too busy wondering why this year's commercials didn't quite seem up to their usual standard or if you happened to be skipping the game to catch "Sex and the City" (like I was), you, my friend, missed the greatest televised popular culture phenomenon since the Madonna-Britney kiss. Although Justin Timberlake claims to have only intended to tear off part of Janet Jackson's costume, what happened was he ripped off enough fabric for full exposure of her right breast. That's right, your football enthusiast grandfather saw one of Janet Jackson's boobs flop out in the open on prime time television. However, full nipple exposure is far from the actuality of the situation. Instead we saw Jackson sporting a new kind of jewelry, a nipple medallion in the form of a silver sunburst. While most of America found themselves, in the words

of one newscaster, "abreast of the situation", the rest of us were left wondering one simple question: are they real? NPR remarked Tuesday that the event left all involved facing "stiff penalties." I mean, "penalties." TiVo announced the halftime show was downloaded more than any other program in the company's history. Now being referred to with such phrases as "Nipplegate" and "Bra-ha-ha," the incident is apparently being investigated by the Federal Communications Committee as well as by CBS officials for violating decency laws. If CBS concludes the performers did plan the stunt, they're considering banning both Justin and Janet from their broadcast of the Grammy awards. But I, for one, hope they make tit-err, it—to the Grammys. Hopefully this time we'll get to see Janet ripping off Justin's clothes.

BEFORE AND AFTER

Official Observer Un-Coverage of The Nipple Seen Round The World!



Snoop Saves Da Game

By Noah Weston

I may be so tangential, I want to begin by noting that video games have played host to a plethora of dreadful protagonists. Only in the last five years has the industry been daring enough to produce games with tolerable, even enjoyable main characters. Even as a wee loser, I pondered the senselessness of manipulating the motions of a plumber who combated fecal-looking creatures with emotive eyes and turtles, rather than do something plausible—like fix someone's fucking plumbing. As a slightly older loser, I moved onto the "fast pace" adventures of a blue hedgehog. Back then, we measured a character's merit in terms of how pointy and in-your-face he/she/it was.

Now, I'm blessed: video games have caught up to my level of maturity and erudition in many ways, particularly their characters. I can be a mobster, a serial killer, or a hitman! Granted, the new crop of respectable video game personalities tend toward criminality more than their predecessors, but that monotony is worth never again assuming control of a shitty plumber with no understanding of his role in society. Upon purchasing *True Crimes: Streets of Los Angeles* for the PlayStation 2, I anticipated potentially playing as a worthy hero, one on the "right" side of the law, at that. Fifteen minutes into the game, I realized that I should stop hoping for things.

True Crimes is a stunningly shallow game, complete with a main character too dumb even for the Hollywood action movies the game emulates in half-seriousness. You are Nick Kang, a cop "rejected by the police and feared by criminals," who engages in reckless high-speed chases, intense gunfights, and heated hand-to-hand combat. While this game tries to be everything but good, I could not help playing it for hours, for a few very particular reasons. For one thing, the game is set in a very rough approximation of Los Angeles, and rich with terrible, but familiar West Coast rap music, appealing to me as a homesick Californian. It also features Christopher Walken as the voice of one of the secondary figures in the story. No matter your gaming sensibilities, Walken makes the experience more bearable for the few minutes he talks every now and then throughout the game. Finally, I cannot write flatteringly enough about one of the game's best features, a hidden game called, "Dogg Patrol." In it you can roam the streets of Los Angeles as Officer Snoop Dogg, in a velour sweatsuit, driving a lowrider Cadillac, and armed with comically large guns. The hours I spent frisking, fighting, and fucking up the streets of Los Angeles validated an otherwise bland title that I would have trouble playing more than twice. Others, however, might just get their fill with a rental. So try it, if only to hear Snoop say "Get out the car before I clap at ya bitch-ass!"



Run Rabbit, Run

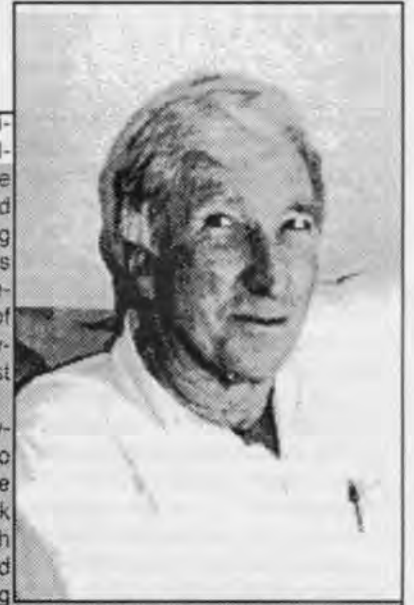
By Len Gutkin

I first came to John Updike in high school with *Rabbit, Run*, that painful, beautiful novel about young Harry "Rabbit" Angstrom—his shitty salesman job, his deteriorating marriage, his affair, his step-mother, his yearning for the glory of his high school basketball career. The three subsequent Rabbit books, *Rabbit Redux*, *Rabbit Is Rich*, and *Rabbit at Rest*, trace the arc of Rabbit's suburban life through adultery, financial success, Rabbit's son's cocaine problem, and, finally, Rabbit's death by heart disease. Each of the novels in the Rabbit tetralogy was written, and takes place, a decade apart, so that Rabbit's life reflects America's shifting landscape: the cultural revolution of the sixties and the Vietnam war, the greed and ever-increasing materialism of the late seventies, and the scourge of AIDS and narcotics in the late eighties. Set against the changing decades are the Updikean constants of sex, marriage, adultery, fear of death, longing for the past, and a precarious sense of grace and God.

In some ways, the genesis for the Rabbit series can be found in the early stories contained in this collection. The stories are arranged according to theme, rather than chronologically: the book's first section deals with childhood, the second with the single, young adult life, the third with marriage, the fourth with divorce, and the fifth with adultery. (The sixth is miscellany and experimental work). Updike's mostly male protagonists are various clearly autobiographical incarnations. Like Updike, they often went to Harvard, they are interested in visual art, they worry about God and death, and they look to sex for a kind of grace it can never quite provide. (*Rabbit*, on the other hand, seems to me Updike sans the Ivy League education and the inhibitions and professionalism—Updike without the armor of his intellect and his genius). Many of the best stories, such as "Pigeon Feathers" and the beautifully titled "Packed Dirt, Churchgoing, A Dying Cat, A Traded

Car," dramatize the terror of an essentially religious man whose faith may be slipping. The adultery stories are also very strong. "Gesturing," one of the best, portrays a man balancing his wife and his lover while living in Boston, where a crumbling glass skyscraper mesmerizes the man from his new apartment. "What a transparent wealth of previous lives overlay a city's present joy!" This sort of longing, what Lorrie Moore calls Updike's "bloody-minded nostalgia," characterizes all of the best stories in the collection.

If Updike can be said to have done anything truly new, it is the intense focus he brings to visual detail. No one invented imagery, but Updike writes as if he wishes he were a painter. I can think of no other contemporary writer with as much knowledge of the visual arts. (Indeed, he studied at the Ruskin School of Drawing after graduating from Harvard, and regularly writes art columns for *The New York Review of Books*). The play of light and color becomes almost a character in these stories. He is, in my opinion, the greatest living prose stylist. His religiosity, his own sense of grace, comes through in this obsession with light, and in his conviction that the visual world, in all of its startling and transitory beauty, can be rendered in words alone.



More Than Jus'A Rascal

By Henry Casey

DIZZEE RASCAL



With a decent amount of hype for an independent artist, the album *Boy in Da Corner* by Dizzee Rascal (Dylan Mills) was released in the US on the 20th of January 2004. Trade papers like *Spin* hailed him as the new big thing in hip-hop. I had heard this before in regard to another Brit-Rapper, The Streets, and was subsequently disappointed with his release. The over emphasis on how British he was, F-Grade techno beats and lyrics which were too caught up in their own vernacular to be interesting made for a lackluster record. Before hearing Mills' album, I was wary and expecting to give it a negative review.

The album starts off with the slow to ignite *Sittin' Here* which has my favorite phrase from the whole album "I think I'm getting weak because my thoughts are too strong." Mills delivers his vocals with a rabid flow that resembles early Busta Rhymes with a cockney accent but at the same time, his paranoia is not akin to Busta's future phobia, Dizzee just hopes he'll get through the day without a nervous breakdown or argument with an ex. No beef with other emcees, no footwear contract, no action movie tie-in, and best of all, no cars or company name checking. *Rolling Stone* recently reported the obvious, how brands like Mercedes and Burberry are popping up in popular rap songs with the frequency of misogyny and homophobia. The only hate Dizzee has is for people who hate him. "Feel free to hate, I ain't trying to be your mate."

The album is definitely something that can get the heads nodding easily. This past Wednesday they played the single "Jus'A Rascal" as a part of the DJ Battle at Four Square. Even though many didn't recognize the song, it was still well received with people nodding along to the groovy guitar and chanting chorus. The reaction was quite the accomplishment, considering that more often than not, the DJ Battle is a competition to play the most songs everyone knows and likes. It was proof: this album is infectious as all fuck.

One of my favorite tracks, "I Luv U" is far from the teeny-pop the misspelled title might suggest. In the song Dizzee and a girl he is digging who rant about each other (to us the listeners) and are unable to hear what the other is saying. It's a battle of the sexes which thankfully stays out of using clichéd words like bitch that most rappers think is the real word for girl. No longer is one party "right" about what happened in the relationship, this song's take on the formula is that both are fucked up individuals and equally untrustworthy. Words mean nothing anymore in this post-apocalyptic love life, as a sample of the female vocalist saying "I love you" is repeated over and over again, almost making a beat out of that alone.

Ultimately, Dizzee Rascal will draw comparisons to rappers from Tupac to The Streets and those will be the declarations from rock critics who like to group and hate to individualize. *Rolling Stone* is already creating a name of a genre around it dubbed "grimy", possibly the worst idea since the term emo. It's not just indie, it's not just underground, it's "dirty" and "grimy". Give me a goddamn break. Just get the album now. It's good!

beyond MP3's

By Henry Casey

The biggest headline in the music world this year was the lawsuits filed by the RIAA against kids illegally downloading songs off of Kazaa. The story got even weirder as the tale progressed, as the lawsuits were for millions of dollars and some of the "culprits" were 9 years old, and one user who used an Apple computer got off scot-free because there is no "official" Kazaa client for Apple products.

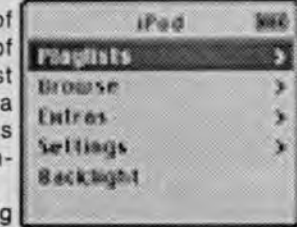
Also in the news of digital music, this was the year Apple became a household name not just for computers, but for music. The paths of legal purchasing of songs through downloads were multiplying like crazy, the most successful of them all being Apple's iTunes Music Store, which was made available for not just Macintosh computers but PC's as well. You can buy songs for 99 cents and single albums usually cost 9.99. The most recent move Apple has made is a partnership with Pepsi. Their ad campaign began at the Superbowl when they announced that every third 20 oz. bottle of Pepsi, customers win a free 99 cent credit for the iTunes Music Store. iTunes has sold over 30 million songs to date and has a library of over 500,000 songs from the big 5 record labels and 200 different independent labels.

The songs you buy are in a protected format known as AAC and are limited in means of copying. Each "playlist" of songs can be burned 10 times before you have to change the order of the tracks. The other means of taking

your songs on the go, is with the new big status symbol of this technological age: the iPod. There are two million of them sold so far, with 730,000 having been sold in the last quarter of 2003. Now there's no way of walking down a street in Manhattan or even a pathway on Bard campus without seeing someone with the white earbud cables coming out of their ears and into a jacket pocket.

One of Apple's other high selling products during this holiday season was gift certificates to the iTunes store, something that I have recently changed my opinion of. I myself collected a few and got to go on a shopping spree picking up albums from everyone from Pink Floyd to Ol' Dirty Bastard to The Talking Heads in the comfort of my own room. As I continued to fill up my iPod, I felt something was missing in this process. I was getting good deals and good music, but this was no where near as fun what it would be like to do the same in a real record store. The sterility of it all, the unsocial nature of buying music and being alone, and the lack of any physical copy of the music as in a CD or record case. I was missing these things. Now that I've all but exhausted my iTunes money, I've decided to give that process up and support local retailers to make sure that they don't get lost in the digital revolution.

This year has taught me a good number of things in music, but I only have one question left, "What's colder than ice cold?"



i have a double major
in TWO DIFFERENT
liberal arts!



too bad you
don't even know
how to drive
a car

Brought to you by the Bard Observer

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Shades Of Black

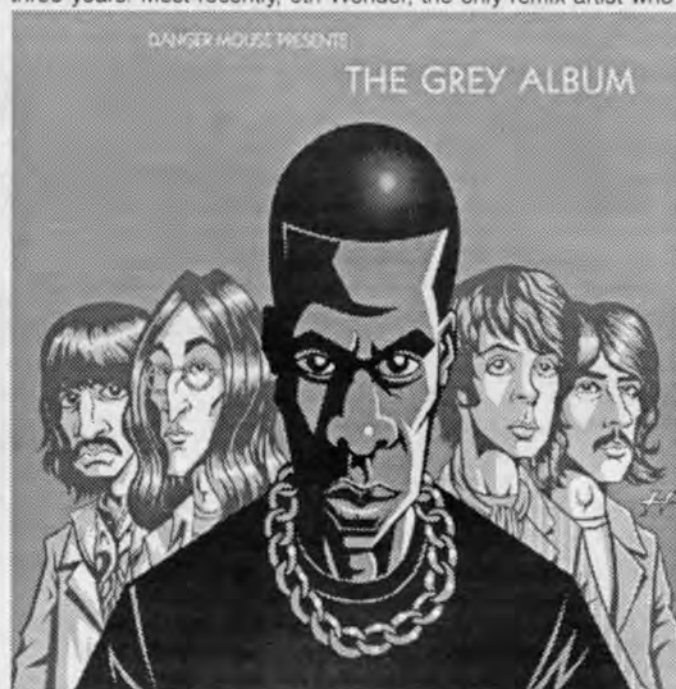
By Noah Weston

Even when the Black Album consisted of just plans and rumors, Jay-Z himself alluded to the record as "his Illmatic." By its internet leak, many (and by "many" I mean "myself") hailed it as a great record, but by no means on par with Illmatic. That is not to say that Jay should have aimed for that kind of release. Enough rappers try to make self-consciously seminal records, and none of them, even Jay-Z, have a chance of succeeding. Jay's album suffered from a lack of coherence, poor sequencing, and inconsistent mixing, none of which troubled Nas too much on Illmatic. That does not matter much though, seeing as how he wisely submitted his cappellas to "the streets" for remixing purposes, in the spirit of 9th Wonder's God's Stepson, the North Carolina producers fantastic take on Nas' God's Son.

Within weeks of the Black Album's release, Kev Brown, of Jazzy Jeff's A Touch of Jazz production unit announced his remix project, The Brown Album. His timely project set the standard high, with a soulful, relaxed reinterpretation of Jay's tracks, except for a few he could not possibly match, like "Encore." At times, though, the album has its overly relaxed points, but the laid-back tone appropriately serves tracks like "Dirt Off Your Shoulder," the anthem of unfaltering nonchalance. Even before The Brown Album dropped, however, DJ Lieutenant Dan knocked out his album of blends, The Black Album Remixes: Back to Basics, full of great mash-ups of Black Album a cappellas and classic rap beats. I swear that I never tire of hearing "Justify My Thug" over "Ain't Nothin' But a G-Thang."

The next phase of remixes were even more promising, aside from Kardinall Offishall and Solitair's The Black Jays Present the Black Album, an amateurish effort with only its spare, but throbbing remix of "Moment of Clarity" to spare it from total disavowal. The three independent producers' projects that followed more than make up for that let-down. On the Grey Album, Danger Mouse takes Jay's vocals and lays them over beats comprised of only samples from the Beatles' White Album. If you cannot find it in record stores, then I would furnish you with a copy, just so you can hear this amazing album, proof that hip hop has plenty creative spirit to sustain it for many more years. Also of note, Kno of Cunninglynguists put together his own remix piece, the White Album (allegedly Southern slang for "album"). While it improves upon some tracks, namely

those with unimpressive beats that the Neptunes provided, it is flat overall and uses far too many samples that other independent hip hop artists have used in the past two or three years. Most recently, 9th Wonder, the only remix artist who actually contributed to the original Black Album, with his track "Threat," makes his mark with Back to Black, a commendable, varied work only second to Danger Mouse's project in creativity, and not as polished as Kev Brown's.



All of these projects, even the shitty ones have the distinction of sounding more cohesive than the original. In addition, it is nice to hear how each producer tries to reconcile Jay placing three "farewell" tracks at the very beginning of the record. In terms making the Black Album their own, each of these producers shine, yet if you only purchase one, it should probably be Danger Mouse's.

WORDS FROM THE OREGON TRAIL

BY JASE MILES-PEREZ

AGES 10 & UP

The Learning Company

Torn Mattos came to me about a week ago. "Yo," he says, "could you write a video game review for the Observer?" "Sure," I say, "when would you need it by?"

"Like next Thursday or Friday."

"How long?"

"About a page single-spaced."

And I think, "Fuck that. That's like two pages double-spaced."

I told Torn that I'd write the review. Really though, I planned to leave it for the last minute, then tell him that I suddenly had to do a shitload of reading for a class that I just transferred into, but I'd love to write the review for the next issue. Sorry, really I'm so sorry, I thought she'd give me more time. Blah blah blah, no harm done.

It was a bad day. I bought two eighty-dollar textbooks. Down the Road was out of Au Bon Pan soup, and it was four degrees outside. By night, I'd forgotten about the article, and was alone watching TV in the Campus Center.

Chandler had a crush on Joey's girlfriend, Susan. She came to the house to go on a date with Joey, but Joey couldn't make it because he was on a date with another girl. Susan chatted with Chandler instead, awkward silences, she gave him a haircut, one thing led to another, they kissed, out to commercial. Oh poo, always at the good part.

The commercials rolled by, so sucky and familiar. Car, diapers, oell phone, paper towels, movie, Hershey Chocolate...wait...who is that Hershey Chocolate girl? I know that girl. I totally know her. That's...Samantha? Sarah? Simone? Simone! That is Simone from P.S. 23. Wow, she got hot. She was best friends with Oh fuck!

"Lauren Jacobson."

Lauren the forehead Jacobson. Lauren was my girlfriend in second grade. She was my first girlfriend. I had the biggest crush on her. She's still the only girl that I can honestly say I had a bigger crush on after we started going out. We called Lauren the forehead because she had a big forehead, bigger than any of ours. It didn't matter to me, though. I used to write her letters every day, always the same question: "Will you marry me?" And always the same three choices: "Yes, No, Maybe." And Lauren always put a check in the "yes" box. We drank from the same straw, held hands, gave each other mad ooties, it was a serious relationship.

So why didn't Lauren Jacobson and I last? Why was it over in two months? Why aren't we married now, gazing longingly into each other eyes over a delicious vegan meal?

The answer to all of those questions is simple: I fell in love. As much as I liked Lauren, it's far enough in the past for me to admit that I wasn't in love with her. I just liked her a lot. But unfortunately for Lauren, at the peak of our relationship I fell in love and fell hard. What I found in my new partner was everything I could ask for. I found adventure and surprises at every turn, risk, caring and a family to care for. I found three unforgettable words: The Oregon Trail. The Oregon fucking Trail, baby! It was over for me when I found that game.

For anyone who doesn't know, The Oregon Trail was a computer game when computer games were still pretty new. It was a masterpiece. This is when every home didn't have a computer, or the only colors most monitors displayed were yellow and black, and the only games you could play were Pong, double-walled Tetris, and Think Quick. It was a dark time. The Oregon Trail was in color, and you could play it with a mouse, instead of on the keyboard, which blew my fucking mind. The player assumed the role of the head of a family. The family is packing up and heading west, on a perilous cross-country journey. The player had a certain amount of money, and had to acquire a wagon, mules, and provisions, but be careful not to spend too much, because that money will be needed in the many towns on your way. Knowing how much to spend - what was needed, what wasn't, what the dangers were - it was a skill.

At any time on the trail, you could stop your wagon and go hunting. Hunting was so much fun in The Oregon Trail! You had your crosshairs and this huge field, and all kinds of animals would

just run out. Rabbits and squirrels were easy kills, but the buffalo were where the real meat was at. The family needed meat, and you knew you had to fire that gun steady and true if you wanted to be a provider like a real fucking family-head.

The way was fraught with many dangers: any family member could be bitten by a rattlesnake, a mule could die, a wheel could break, you could be robbed in the night, fellow travelers could make unfair trades with you, a river needed crossing, your wagon overturned in the river, the computer could shut down unexpectedly, something might get unplugged, the list is long.

The game was a study in personality. The cocky kids always bought up too many provisions and burned out eventually. The unsure ones were too careful and died early. If I had to go to war, I'd want the best Oregon Trail player by my side in the foxhole.

That fucking game took nerves of steel. You knew that if, IF you made it to the west, you'd be coming with less people than you left with. Family members dropped like flies, but there was no time to mourn the losses. You moved on because you knew they would want you to move on. A man who's walked the trail is a changed man. He has dead eyes, hands like a bag of clams, and can chew thumbtacks like bubblegum.

That's what The Oregon Trail meant to me, and a generation of second-graders like me, and deep down, I knew that Lauren Jacobson would never understand it. One day in class, while I was busy at the computer screen, Lauren came to me.

"Jase," she said, "can I talk to you?"

"Yeah."

Silence

"What?" I said.

"Would you look at me?"

"I am looking at you."

"No you're not. You're playing The Oregon Trail."

"Lauren I can see you in the corner of my eye. You're wearing white pants."

"I'm not wearing pants."

I looked, she was bluffing. It was a dirty trick. In all fairness to her though, the pants were blue.

"Are you mad at me?" she asked.

"No."

"Yes you are. You only play on the computer and never talk to me anymore."

She started to cry, and I wanted to explain to her that these things happen, that the game was just that good, that I guess I still liked her, and if there was no game would definitely still like her, but I was seven, and games were more important to me than girls. And even more truthfully, that isn't what I was thinking. I wish I thought that, because it's a very sweet thought, but at the time I only cared about getting back to the game, and Lauren could probably tell.

When I gave Lauren the regular note that day, to my "Will you marry me?" she checked the 'maybe' box. I knew that our relationship with Lauren was over. I would have to leave her behind like one of the many dead carcasses on that brutal trail. And as hard as it might be, the second grade would go on.

I dug up Simone's number to congratulate her on the commercial, and she told me that Lauren goes to Michigan now. Apparently she's into communications and she's dating some guy and she's really happy. Good for her. Last night I went to Four Square and got drunk, then went back to my room and felt alone.

Then I thought about The Oregon Trail, all of the adventures I had, how hard I struggled all those years ago so my family live to see the west, and I smiled and didn't feel lonely anymore. So Lauren, I guess things worked out for both of us.

Char-Par

Shining some Light On Insight

By Patrick Rogers

This album rocks like it's 1993 again. Insight, a MC/DJ/Producer from Boston, puts out the total effort to bring you his new release Updated Software 2.5. All the beats, rhymes, and scratches are from the man himself. No guests. No skits. Just some mellow, head-nodding tracks that are reminiscent of old Gangstarr beats (scratched choruses and all) topped with Insight's more than able lyrical skills.

So far as the verses go, they are standard fare for underground hip-hop. Insight reminds the listener to stay true, stay positive, and don't let The Man get you down. While this type of stuff often comes off self-righteous, and/or overdone, Insight manages to keep his rhymes fresh. Then again, he occasionally sounds more like a schoolboy reciting lessons, than actually spouting from the heart.

The beats are all textbook sampler work, which



on the first listen can seem repetitive, but after a few listens at a high volume you will find that the tracks are layered with sounds that come in and out of the original hook. Insight, a former electrical engineer, also hides cut out bass tones, pops and glitches behind a few of the beats, adding a ton of texture to his sound.

As if the album wasn't enough, a second disc is included which features almost thirty minutes of Insight mixing extra beats with some samples and scratches. Some of the second disc's beats are even hotter than the album's beats. So while it isn't a disc worthy of its own release, it is definitely a nice addition, and shows just how much work Insight puts into his work. This is definitely an album worth checking out, especially if your tired of getting albums full of shouting and barking.

Obsessing Over 60's Southern Soul Pt. 1

By Chris Konker

"I've waited all night for this!!" You can hear stuff like this in James Brown's early work, when part of what made him the "hardest working man in show business" was that he was working audiences into an absolute frenzy, building to a screaming crescendo over the course of 12-15 - even as much as 30 minutes, testifying with lyrical simplicity, but with the kind of vocal and rhythmic prowess that makes one wonder what makes a man whim-



per "please!" on his knees for that long? And what kind of talent is it that allows a performer to get away with a stunt like that? Granted, he got the screams as payoff for his exertion, but at best it was a similar chorus of screams to what the Beatles were getting in the same year, 1964, for being cute on stage. What would James have thought? "I Feel Good" "Papa's Got a Brand New Bag." Did anybody write about himself better than James? "WATCH-A ME!!" I think he knew he was twice the hot shit of anybody else out there.

But James really did have competition for black audiences. He had a whole lot of it in the 400 pound Solomon Burke, the self-proclaimed King of Rock n' Soul, bishop, and licensed mortician. His mother had visions of him years before he was born. There were Sam Cooke and Ray Charles, two originators who made the transition from gospel music to secular. They influenced great soul shouters like Otis Redding but Cooke, especially, was really quite a smoothie—"You Send Me," "Wonderful World." However, the contrast of the funky blues numbers which made the clubs shake with wa-tussi's and mashed potatoes against the slow burning love songs composed the typical soul man's repertoire. The best of them could all shout with midnight alley-cat fervor and toughness, especially Wilson "Wicked" Pickett, but Cooke and Burke would slow it down considerably for full release of their seductive persuasion. Cooke, according to Pickett, was fully capable of giving orgasms to church-going women with any tone of voice he chose.

I'm talking about southern soul music from the 1960s, the now-defunct art of singing. However, it seems to be defunct in the sense that segregated bathrooms and buses are now defunct. The music responded very directly to the society of the time - when a traveling black musician in the south couldn't stay at most hotels nor play at most clubs. The fact that the music generally portrays women characters in the role of subordinate to the men in the context of the lower-middle class household also makes this style a sort of musical relic of days far gone. For these reasons, the music is very persistently peculiar. For example, Joe Tex sings a song about the value of holding onto what you've got...ok, sing it Joe, I feel that...but lest I speak too soon, here comes the secular sermon in the middle. There goes Joe, "Every man wants a good woman for his very own, a woman who will stay home and watch the children while he is away at work." Or there is Cooke again, who in the midst of a particularly stirring message of love, might testify that it doesn't help any man to beat up on his wife. What?? Today, material such as this might serve a comic well for a few shock laughs, only in a soul man's show, it is presented with a tone of unmistakable innocence that communicates what is always a message of love

and peace, but with such rawness, feeling, and truth that the intensity remains. Solomon Burke can say in all seriousness "If ya'll will sing along with me, I truly believe we can change the world tonight" and make it sound convincing. Yet, moments later, he can say, in the midst of his love ode "You're Good for Me", "Lord, all we need is a water bed now!" and it's all part of the experience. In the world of soul, there is nothing if not so much feeling for life that it must be expressed in some physical emotion. The art form's interpreters preach an extremely sensual love to their audience, knowing full well that if we couldn't get into that love, all our feeling would pour out in anger somewhere down the road. Life just has too much soul that its gonna get to you somehow.

Nearly every great soul singer is gone now. Otis Redding's plane crashed, Sam Cooke was shot after a hooker stole his pants, and James Brown seems intent to give his dignity away to the law in the form of domestic disputes. Al Green and Solomon Burke are the only recently active soul men, although they seem to be more occupied as pastors. What we are now left with is the legends. Otis used to conduct all of his studio sessions shirtless and with towels under both armpits. If you listen to him, Otis' great distinction from other soul singers was that on record, he never really seemed to stop singing, but would grunt audibly in the background during instrumental breaks. Fellow Stax label-mates Sam and Dave, a.k.a. "Double Dynamite" never settled to walk onstage at a show, but would invariably strut, seemingly buzzing with excitement about what the audience was about to experience. I can see some hip hoppers getting into this music. It is a totally different experience in a way than hip hop, but both convey the intensity of a musician making a show around the framework of grooves, the spontaneity of improvisation, observations of the heart, soul, or mind, heavy interaction with the audience, and of course, sweat. Here are some tracks that cover much of the ground that southern soul music occupied during its heyday from 1955 until 1968.

Essential Soul Tracks

ROOTS

Were You There? - Sam Cooke and the Soul Stirrers
Move Along Train - The Staple Singers
Freedom Highway (Studio)
Work With Me Annie - Hank Ballard and the Nightingales
Sexy Ways: The Best of...

The Dark End of the Street - James Carr
You Got My Mind Messed Up
When Something Is Wrong With My Baby - Sam and Dave
Sweat N' Soul Anthology
A Change Is Gonna Come - Sam Cooke
Portrait of a Legend: 1951-1964
Cry to Me - Solomon Burke
Soul Alive!
Entire album of Live at the Apollo 1963 - James Brown
Don't Let Your Children Pay - Joe Tex
25 Greatest Hits
Bring It On Home to Me - Sam Cooke
Live at the Harlem Square, 1963
A Man and a Half - Wilson Pickett
Greatest Hits (1985)
Ain't No Way - Aretha Franklin
Lady Soul
Satisfaction - Otis Redding
Otis Blue: Otis Redding Sings Soul



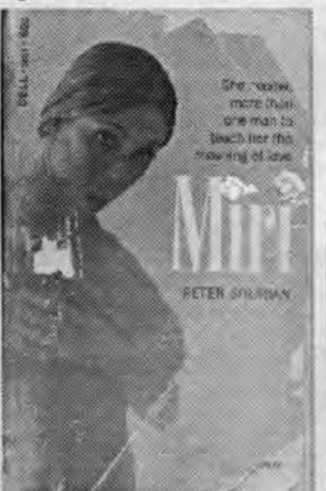
Beyond the Pulpy Cover

By J

What would you think if you picked up a book, saw a naked woman on the cover with her arms concealing her torso, and a caption above the title that reads: "She needed more than one man to teach her the meaning of love." I hate to begin a book review by talking about the cover, but in discussing *Miri*, the first novel published by Bard professor Peter Sourian, there's really no alternative than to begin with a cover that screams soft-core porn like nothing I've ever seen before (except perhaps the cover art for the 1983 film "Barbarian Master"). Front and back, the folks at Dell Publishing Co. did their best to trick potential readers into believing that they were in for a tome full of references to swollen members, flaming loins, and the like. My expectations were raised (or lowered) even more when I glanced at the description on the back cover: "It all began with *Miri* - an exotic Greek girl who yearned for love from behind a veil of ugly memories...And then there was Lexy - her rebellious, arrogant cousin who denied his feelings for her until he could no longer control them...And then there was Josh - Lexy's college roommate, who wanted *Miri* in a way few men had ever wanted her before...And then there was an explosion."

The actual book has a lot more substance than the manner in which it's presented. Sourian follows three characters through a love triangle, dividing the book up into three sections, each one written from the perspective of a different character. It begins with *Miri*, who has fled to the United States to live with her uncle and attend school after her entire family dies in World War II. *Miri*'s cousin, Lexy, ran away from home upon graduating from high school, and had not been back since. His college was across the river from *Miri*'s, and at his mother's constant cajoling, eventually goes across the river to see her. Not wanting to go alone on his obligatory family visit, Lexy takes his roommate, Josh, along with him. Josh, a clean-cut New Englander, is instantly captivated by the "exotic Greek girl," and begins to take her out regularly. Later we find out that *Miri* and Josh's apparently developing romance is taking a huge toll on Lexy, though he refuses to let either one of them know it.

The love triangle that results is interesting, but once the book advances beyond the initial stages of each character's section, in which each of them discusses their insecurities about how to present themselves to those around them and how to shape their interaction with others, the story loses a lot. The idea of telling a simple story three times through the eyes of the three people who compose it makes *Miri* an involved read, and sometimes also makes it frustrating. Through the whole book, Josh is completely clueless and deluded, thinking that *Miri* is in love with him and that he wants to marry her, and entirely unaware that she sees Lexy every night while he's asleep and that the two are beginning to fall in love. The way Sourian conveys Josh's ineptitude through the other two characters' deeper understanding is fantastic. The early psychoanalysis that each of the characters engage in is also done incredibly well, capturing effectively the insecurities that accompany an individual's search to define him/herself as he/she progresses towards adulthood. The end, however, left a lot to be desired. Until the very end this book was completely bereft of exotic imagery, until the climax (heh heh), in which Lexy gives *Miri* her first orgasm (which I assume is the "explosion" to which the back cover refers). I guess somehow there's supposed to be meaning in the way in which Lexy discovers that he needs *Miri*, as someone to guide him through his troubles with his overbearing father and help him find direction to a life he had heretofore spent drifting aimlessly, but I couldn't help feeling that the book never really went anywhere. I also thought it was kind of weird that there's never any mention of the fact that it might seem a bit out of the ordinary/wrong that two cousins were having a love affair. Isn't that illegal? I don't know...maybe it's a Greek thing.



observer

Blink-182 Repent For Their Sins

By Henry Casey

I've heard a lot of talk lately over "hell freezing over" in many aspects of pop culture. With *Return of the King*, a sci-fi epic seems to have an amazing chance at the Oscars. Apple Computers has released their precious iTunes (an mp3 jukebox program) for uber rival Microsoft's "Windows" operating system. And to top it all off, Michael Jordan was actually fired from a basketball team. But loyal readers, I'm here to tell you about something that tops all of those for shockers: Robert Smith, yes the Robert Smith, lead singer from The Cure did vocals for a song on Blink 182's surprisingly mature new self-titled album. It took me a while to even get this album because of my doubt in its ability to not suck. But fear not reader, cause it's good.

Now I'm not going to call the band that made this album a completely new Blink 182, but it certainly feels like it sometimes. There are no "dick and fart" jokes here, no talk of incest, bestiality or even porn stars. This is the introspective hangover that would be expected after 6 albums of the aforementioned subject matter. This is a depressed album (with the exception of the upbeat single "Feeling This") about abusive relationships, broken hearts and mortality. The boys are far from the ode to telling your crush how you feel that was "Dammit," and have made that journey with precision. This is not to say that they've lost their knack for knowing the vernacular of the romantic, with phrases like "still pushing that

chance to try" they show that they are the same band just with a somewhat different view now. In the time that Blink182 have been a band, their fans have matured more than Blink's music has. Because of this they had to use this album as a starting point for a shift of showing the maturity and talent that they have. One band who you can see them aping throughout the album is The Cure. In the liner notes, Tom DeLonge the band's guitarist, admits his fandom of the band and says that their acoustic vibe was something that The Cure's "Love Cats" inspired him to do. While their new sound is nothing in comparison to The Cure, it's nice to see them paying some respect to their elders.

But as I said before, Robert Smith does sing on their album, which would lead one to believe that everything the critics ever said about Blink sucking was wrong. How could this rock god actually help out a few miscreants from Southern California further their stacks of cash? When the song in question is good, that's when. "All of This" which Smith co-wrote and sung on, is about a man just hoping that this girl Holly will use and abuse him. He wants Holly so much, "She's all I need / She's all I dream / She's all I'm always wanting", that he doesn't care if she just uses him. He'll give anything to be with her, and this desperate plea for her is a stand out moment for the band and the album.

I feel the song "Go" is the another strong effort on the record. It's talks about Mark's relationship with his mother and father, who were in an abusive relationship. The vocals find bassist Mark Hoppus questioning his mother about running from her husband, "Mom get in the car and let's drive away / She said I'm sorry Mark but there's nowhere to stay / Turn your back on hope and go back inside / Hid her broken heart and let the engine die." This is just a sample of how these rascals are trying to convert their image of pop punk criminals, to just being a decent band. With three or four more albums of this quality, and improvement along the way, they might finally be seen a decent band.



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WINTER WINOS

By Alex Cannon, Connor Gaudet, and Jonathan Trumbley

Have you ever eaten food after it expired? Well, no more need to throw away those old grapes because if you wait long enough, they'll turn into a liquid problem solver. Like Jesus' second coming once you resurrect those grapes they'll be tasty and alcoholic, who knew? Well, apparently the French and a whole bunch of other people, but we're not counting. Nor are we trying to get our French dual citizenship. No, we're just drinking. Drinking, for you.

Wine is a tricky species of alcohol that has a tendency to be in large jugs labeled Carlo Rossi when found on this campus. We are three valiant men who are tired of Mr. Rossi and all his tricks. Our intention with this column is to inform Bard College of different wines that are able to please the pallet without breaking the bank. We'll try to find two or three wines each issue. We buy based on store recommendations, reader's suggestions, and personal preferences. Our hope is that we help you find better wines for the same price. This week we are focusing on three different Merlots.

-Domaine Boyar 2001, Black Sea Region, Bulgaria PRICE: \$2.99

This is a very good deal for the price. While we found this to be rather thin-bodied, it didn't spare the flavor. It has a smooth, dry texture that compliments the subtle fruity taste. Opposed to many other low-end wines, it spares the drinker the acidic after-bite, which is usually expected of a three-dollar bottle. As a merlot, price not considered, the bottle is somewhat lacking. Its watery flavor dissipates and the body disappears, leaving almost no trace of the taste behind. This particular wine is no longer being produced. Therefore, supplies are limited.

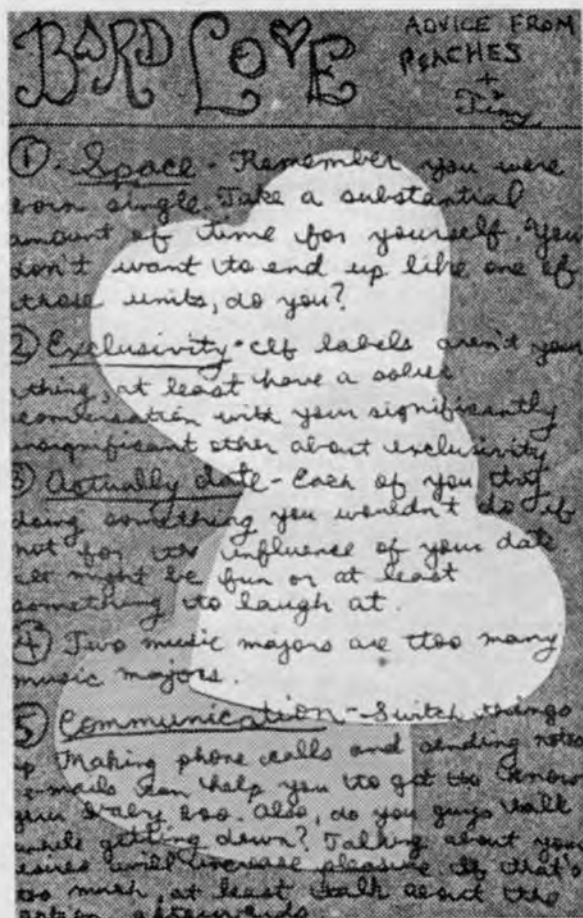
-Hacienda 2002, Sonoma, California PRICE: \$6.99

Hacienda makes a stereotypical merlot. Unfortunately, the desire to create a full-bodied, flavorful wine leads to an overwhelming drinking experience. Despite being a decent wine, price considered or not, it's clumsy and forced. Both the taste and the aftertaste lack any notion of subtlety and the fact that the spicing is pleasant is almost completely masked by its overbearing nature. By no means is this a bad wine, but you could do much better.

-Forest Glen (Oak Barrel Selection) 2001, Sonoma, California PRICE \$9.99

This is far and away the best of the three merlots we had. If you have the money, by all means do yourself a favor and buy this wine. Its robust, smoky flavor perfectly balances its sturdy body and appealing scent. This is not an overwhelming drink. It builds to a strong woody flavor leaving the drinker with little more than its subtle kick and a smile. All and all, this is one tasty beast of a merlot.

Questions and recommendations should be sent to the Observer@bard.edu or feel free to stop us if you see us. All bottles reviewed are available for purchase at Fitz's Liquor Store 1355 Ulster Ave. Kingston, NY (across from Walmart).



CCS Review

By Annie Christian

Nobody at Bard resists poop cakes or grave dirt pudding, stinky cheese or a dentist size cup of decent white wine. When such gourmet food is coupled with the chance to strut one's fashionable assemblage and enjoy the outside world's art, we show up to the opening reception at the Center for Curatorial Studies. Few students truly care about the curatorial design, but some of the works in the exhibitions make CCS worth the trip, even after all the food is gone.

If it's not love, it's the bomb- If possible, go see the animated films by William Kentridge. They're a charcoal whirl of powerful, movement-rich images, and the music is entrancingly alive. Even without a prior knowledge of their origin or intended content, the films impart to the audience an essence and location of pain. In general, this exhibition is the most cohesive of the three.

Suspended State- Please avoid the conceptually inert sculpture by Robert Morris; "Blanket on a wall" fits better than its current name. The best is Aida Rullova's short video montages, which entertain with their wildness, urgency and repetition.

Assemblage- This is my favorite out of the three. With a discerning eye, look at Nikki S. Lee's photographs. There's something oddly similar about them. The film by Coco Fusco and Guillermo Gomez Pena prevails as the most thought-provoking piece. I spent a good five minutes watching with awe. Daniela Rossell's photographs are boring portraits of the rich, and Patty Chang disgusted and delighted me. What can I say? I prefer fistfuls and mouthfuls of hotdogs to some overstuffed blonde humping a tiger.



the drab report

by Tom Mattos

Stop Talking Shit

Outline for a New Semester

The Editors

The Observer's description in the fuel book reads as follows: "Pretty people putting out a pretty paper." While we have the force of alliteration on our side, the "prettiness" is usually lacking. The four editors for this semester—Tom Mattos, Ethan Porter, Henry Casey and Jamie Neuman—attest to that fact. We are not pretty: we are gruff, strange, and our vision of what the Observer could be described as "immature," "offensive" and "lacking creativity." The "prettiness" of the paper itself is a lie as well. Though we try our best to make our paper look good, garnishing it with dozens of "cool" pictures, from a shot of a sign that reads "Vassar Got Me Pregnant," to a lovely shot of Janet's nipple medalion, we are still hampered by faulty equipment, shitty newsprint, and the competitor that flaunts us all: father time. Sometimes pictures will be too gray, and sometimes there will be a few typos. We apologize. But remember, we piss away countless hours of our lives holed up in the basement of Tewks, slaving away at something of questionable impact. So we at the Observer ask for one favor, and one favor only: give us a fucking break.

This semester's staff is on the go, brimming with enthusiasm and generally ready to kick ass. Technology problems have been fixed. There is a good feeling of momentum. This is significant. It hardly needs to be said that we are now facing, as a community, as a nation, and as citizens of the world, some of the most crucial and dangerous crises of our times. As (ostensibly) educated people, our goal should be not to merely exist, but rather to bend the walls, or break them down completely. It's like that El-P line, "This is for kids worried about the apocalypse / do something / prepare yourselves / stop talking shit."

Of course, that's what WE think. What do YOU think? This paper isn't great, but it's good enough. The only way it's going to be better is if YOU start contributing. At a school full of "individuals" (whatever the fuck that means), there should be more participation. Creative writing classes are full of aspiring authors, political science classes are teeming with people who claim they are going to change the world. Yet when we ask these people, "Yo bro, you wanna write for the Observer" we get responses like "I'm too afraid to write and have that many people read it." Considering the fact that the Observer is, at best, "allegedly" a newspaper, this seems like the excellent training ground for learning what it means to write for an audience. You have very little to lose—perhaps not much to gain, but very little to lose.

Though the editorial staff organizes the paper, the writers are the people that make it happen, just like the staff box says. It is for this reason that we want to make our editorial policy clear. We edit for coherency and grammar only. However, we also take into account style, voice, and audience, which pretty much means we will print anything. In the Observer office the other night, there was a short conversation about what we will print. As it stands, we vow to print anything and everything. So far there has not been a single article or picture that has made our stomachs turn so much that we react with censorship. And yes, you can consider that a dare.

As a result of this policy, we are also hereby dismissing the little box that read "the opinions expressed in the Observer do not reflect the opinions of the Observer staff." Of course they do. It just so happens that it is of our opinion to help people express their opinions. While we place no guarantees on the substance of an article, we do place a guarantee that we will stand by the author's right to express his or her opinion, and have it broadcasted to the campus. In the case of Jeremy Low's article entitled "On Women," the entire editorial staff does not 100% agree with him; however, we stand by his right to believe whatever the fuck he wants.

If this all winds up getting us into trouble, so be it. If the campus turns maniac and we're printing pictures of monkeys masturbating, so be it. At least we'll be interesting.

This drab report is sort of a retelling of my first drab report. Since no one remembers, except for me, I'll give you the thesis: I vowed never to speak of the Old Bard vs. New Bard debate ever again. Obviously, I have broken that vow in the past. However, when we rooted through the Observer office to get rid of the trash that somehow accumulated over fifteen years in our office, we came upon a gem of an article in a back issue from May 22, 2000. The article was entitled "25 Years with Botstein," and I think that it ends the Old Bard-New Bard debate once and for all.

In a mere eleven questions, virtually every single contemporary issue at Bard has been completely shut down. The debate rages over the changing face of Bard, and the students are always up in arms over new buildings and new people that keep showing up. I remember drinking heavily at the open bar in the PAC on the gala opening, and giggling as naked students tried to ride bikes into the lobby. I love situations that make us think, that keep us on our toes, but, we all have to admit: the debate is pointless.

Apparently, at the time of printing, the debate was raging over Albee. The building. While I am not exactly sure what the hell is going on in Albee—it seems as if there are professors and math students inhabiting it—it doesn't matter. There are people on this campus that would consider it inconceivable that this building did not exist. Same thing with the campus center. People opposed that innocent little convenient building as if it was Satan's own little den in which he would play foosball and deliver your late library notices. Now, the campus center is indispensable. The first thing I do when I am hungover and my life is disorganized as shit is walk my ass down to the campus center to check my mail. But sometimes you have a large package that gets delivered out to the triangle at that weird building. If there is a building that we need to raze it's that one.

Back to the thread of seriousness: The article, in all of its interest, reminds us that our experience here at Bard is limited to approximately four years. Yeah, sometimes it takes five. Either way, within half a decade everyone who was here is now not here anymore, except for the people who are. People like President Botstein or the workers at Kline or the guys at B&G who make everything work smooth. Or servicemaster, with all of their trials and tribulations—maybe we should listen to them about the changing face of Bard rather than cobble together some bullshit rhetoric about how we want to preserve something that we weren't so impressed by to begin with.

It's a ridiculous debate to even worry about. If this place grows into an actual institution, I say that's great. Maybe our diplomas will be worth something. Instead of clamming off the coast of Maine you might be able to get a job as the best boy dolly grip on one of our beloved "independent films." Whatever. Soon you're going to fade away into the sunset and leave this place behind, so why really worry about it? Let the people who are involved in this for their life's work worry about what's changed and what's the same and concentrate on what you need to do to make yourself a better, more informed and more genuine member of society.

And if you're still hung up on this bullshit debate and think change is bad, take a look at the cover: Imagine Bard never changed, and you had to wait for a parade of soldiers to march by before you could go to your Intro 40 the theology of baseball class. Picture that.

Sorry this drab report sucks. I'm out of time.

Just Vote for the Poor Guy

Although he's currently quite wealthy.

By: Matt Rozsa

Many people are inherently suspicious of North Carolina Senator John Reid Edwards. Some feel that he is too inexperienced, too conservative, or simply believe that his only good quality is his electability. I, however, believe that John Edwards would make the ideal Democratic candidate for President, both in his ability to win the election and in his strong leadership.

I shall first discuss the issue of electability. Although one should never declare anything to be certain in American politics, it seems very unlikely that Bush will win any of the New England, Mid-Atlantic, or Pacific Coast states, with the possible exceptions of New Hampshire and Oregon. This probability would guarantee any prospective Democratic candidate a minimum of 183 electoral votes. Likewise, it is exceedingly improbable that any Democrat will crack the regions of the country that have in essence become Bush fiefdoms (the Deep South, the Rocky Mountain states, and the Plains states) with the possible exceptions of Florida and New Mexico. This guarantees the President a minimum of 142 electoral votes and leaves 213 electoral votes up for grabs, most of which are located in the Midwest and Upper South. It is in these regions that I believe the selection of the Democratic candidate will be most vital. There is little question that in both of those regions, support for President Bush's foreign policy is a majority issue. Therefore aggressively pacifistic candidates such as Howard Dean would have no chance of winning these states. That leaves social and economic policies to consider.

On social issues, candidates with a record of being outspokenly liberal on issues that are anathema to the South—the issue being most prominent on my mind here is gay rights—are going to be in trouble. On such issues candidates like Dean and Lieberman would suffer the most, whereas candidates such as Edwards and Kerry—who both advocate allowing issues such as civil unions to be left up to the states—would be in less danger politically. But the main issues that attract my attention are economic issues. Throughout his campaign, Senator Edwards has made a point of focusing on the economic issues that matter most to people who have been hit hardest by the Bush economy—issues such as jobs, education, and health care. Other candidates such as Kerry do talk about these issues, but they avoid making them the centerpieces of their campaigns, and they never speak of them with the intensity and conviction with which Edwards focuses on them. What's more, unlike Dean or Kerry, Edwards does not come from an affluent blue-blooded background. He is, as he never fails to point out, the son of a mill worker, and has more in common with people from these regions than do either his

Democratic rivals or President Bush himself. Thus Edwards, more than any other Democratic candidate, can best strike Bush in the Midwest and Upper South on the economic issues where he is most vulnerable. If you assume that Edwards wins the Midwestern states that are traditionally Democratic (Minnesota and Wisconsin), and pulls in some of the Midwestern and Upper Southern states hardest hit by the Bush economy (Michigan, Ohio, Illinois, and his home state of North Carolina), then you have Edwards winning with an electoral majority of 276.

But there is more to Senator Edwards's merits than his electability. He is also known throughout the Senate as a personable and friendly individual who has made virtually no enemies, an attribute that is very important for any future President to possess if he wants to have legislation pass through those hallowed halls (and attributes which men such as Kerry and Dean are both sorely lacking). What's more, Edwards—unlike Kerry, Dean, and Clark—has what is in my opinion a very progressive and innovative approach to American domestic policy. This includes, to give a brief summary, a tax credit to prevent companies from exporting American jobs overseas, an education policy that guarantees the first year of college tuition to be free for all future students (which would be compensated by each student having to perform 10 hours of weekly community service), a series of health care policies that would enforce a Patients' Bill of Rights and place greater restrictions on insurance companies and HMOs, and complete rollbacks to Bush's entire disastrous set of environmental policies (for further details visit Edwards' incredibly user-friendly website, www.JohnEdwards2004.com). As for the criticism that Edwards is too inexperienced to be able to convert such programs into reality, I would remind the critics that two of our nation's most successful legislative presidents—Woodrow Wilson and Franklin Roosevelt—both came into the White House with absolutely no legislative background (whereas Edwards has a little). Yet both were able to pass some of the most progressive legislation in our nation's history because they possessed many of the same qualities—sharp intellect, amiable character, a conviction that is tempered by a reasonable flexibility—that I believe John Edwards also possesses.

Senator John Reid Edwards of North Carolina would make the ideal presidential candidate for the Democratic party because he is an electable candidate who has the potential to become a great and progressive President of the United States. That is why I support him in this primary election and hope to see him as the Democratic Party's nominee in the 2004 election.

If you have a busted ass, shite bike laying around on campus, and it's covered in snow, and it has no air in the tires, and you don't lock it up, and its rusty...

It will be confiscated
on FEBRUARY 28,
2004
You've been warned.

observer

Bush Goes to Prison, Millions Rejoice

So Called "President" Reunited With Former Fraternity Brothers

By Christina Rosetti

When I sat down to watch the State of the Union Address, I was prepared to turn into the ferocious liberal monster that only a president like Bush could make me. After a few minutes of listening to me sass off at the screen every time Bush paused for applause from half of Congress, my sister told me that I was bugging the hell out of her. She said I'd be a lot less frustrated if I tried to accentuate the positive things in Bush's speech. Since I don't really like the sensation of angry blood running through my veins or the feeling of hopelessness ruining my outlook on the future, I decided to take her advice and look for a section of Bush's speech that would draw something less than the full power of my righteous indignation. And to my surprise, I found something! A proposal to lower the rate of recidivism among parolees by providing inmates with rehabilitation programs. The section's so short there's no need to paraphrase:

"This year, some 600,000 inmates will be released from prison back into society. We know from experience that if they can't find work, or a home, or help, they are much more likely to commit more crimes and return to prison. So I propose a four-year, \$300 million Prisoner Re-Entry Initiative to expand job training and placement services, to provide transitional housing, and to help newly released prisoners get mentoring, including from faith-based groups. America is the land of the second chance- and when the gates of the prison open, the path ahead should lead to a better life."

True, \$300 million is not a lot of money; and faith-based mentoring probably wouldn't be as valuable to an inmate as a GED -- but despite the meager fiscal support and half-baked handouts to religious organizations, I can still appreciate the importance of an infamously 'tough-on-crime' Republican talking about half-way housing and rehabilitation, rather than mandatory sentences and harsher punishments.

Bush may still want to keep with the tradition of Reagan and his dad by getting tough on criminals and having a prison cell waiting for every drug dealer; but America can't afford to do that anymore. Due to simple economic necessity, compassion for our nation's inmates has finally made its way back onto the political agenda. We created the second largest prison system in the world, following China. Our rate of incarceration is higher than any other country and continues to increase even as the crime rate drops. We lengthened and standardized sentences to keep offenders in prison for longer periods of time, and built new prisons to house them. To pay for these prisons we cut rehabilitation programs and ignored the fact that eventually 97% of the inmates would be released back into society without any attempt made to reform them. When GED classes, job training and drug treatment programs in prisons are scarce, more inmates are likely to return to crime upon release. Our prisons have become warehouses instead of places of reform. Bush's proposal to invest money in rehabilitation programs could mean that politicians are finally seeing the damage done by the tough-on-crime policies. They have begun to look for cost-effective ways to curb the prison population after discovering that building more prisons to cut down on crime was an extremely unconstructive approach that the public no longer supports and that the states can no longer afford.

In 1970, the Corrections Law in New York stated that the Department of

Corrections must "assess a prisoner's educational and vocational needs and provide each inmate with a program of education which seems most likely to further the process of socialization and rehabilitation, the objective being to return these inmates to society with a more wholesome attitude toward living." Compare this with Clinton's Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act passed twenty four years later, which said that Federal courts would not hold prison or jail crowding unconstitutional, unless the plaintiff could prove that the crowding inflicted cruel and unusual punishment on him. In 1994, the law addressed the fact that our prisons were overcrowded to a degree that could be considered cruel and unusual punishment. In a period as short as 24 years, legislators went from requiring the Department of Correctional Services to socialize its inmates by meeting their educational needs, to making it legal to cram the most bodies into prisons as cheaply as possible. Currently, only 9% of prisoners are in full-time job training or education programs, while 26% are completely idle.

Fortunately, policymakers are realizing that making cuts in rehabilitation programs has only created revolving door prisons, huge budget problems for states, and a growing population of stigmatized, poor and uneducated ex-convicts. They will also have an easier time convincing voters that it's in their best interest to spend money on rehabilitation instead of prison construction now that the prison system has become almost unsustainable. Bush's proposal to invest in rehabilitation programs shows that he knows voters will be more likely to support a politician committed to reducing the prison population.

Today, the argument for restoring rehabilitation programs to prisons is not that it is the decent thing to do, or the obligation of a just society, but rather, it is the most cost-effective solution to reducing the number of prisoners in light of the nation's huge prison population. In an article entitled "Educating Inmates is Worth the Investment," Senator Kohl-Welles of Washington writes that "If correctional education helps prevent former inmates from committing more crimes, that means fewer victims -- which means less suffering for our fellow citizens and less money spent on enforcement, prosecution and incarceration." The language of her justification for educational programs remains sympathetic to potential victims, not the offenders. She argues that we should educate our inmates because if we don't, they will be more likely to harm the community after their release. Whereas 30 years ago, before the tough-on-crime mentality pervaded the criminal justice system, she could have argued that we should make it our duty to educate our nation's inmates because somehow they were not properly socialized, and when they're in prison we have the opportunity to correct the faults that caused he or she to commit the crime.

Over the last thirty years the public believed the high number of incarcerated men and women proved that crime was being controlled. Now the public looks at the staggering prison population and sees a drain on the economy and an ineffective way of dealing with crime. By creating his Prisoner Re-Entry Initiative, Bush has shown that he's ready to take a new and more compassionate approach to dealing with offenders-- of course, the compassionate part is only coincidental.

Reporting From the Projects

A Senior Lays It Down

By Stacey Hunt

No, I'm not talking about the June 4-8, 1942 battle of WWII, but for some of us the coming weeks could appear to be a replaying of those historical events. I'm talking about the dreaded "midway" meeting that all seniors are facing. It's the midway point of the senior project, and the critical point for many of us. For those of us writing a research project, it is the time when we actually have to put our thoughts down on paper and make all that research some sort of fluid story for our board to critique. Some of us have already completed senior project midway meetings, but the rest of us, including myself, have yet to face our board. Whether or not the dreaded meeting is behind us or in front of us, the same midway problem still presents itself: writing.

I was so anxious to start my second chapter that I came back Bard a week early from winter break. By working in two hour chunks and taking much needed breaks in between, I managed to finish the rough draft of my second chapter, but now comes the next dreaded step: editing. Editing is a hell unto itself because it means looking for hours at the rough draft garble that I managed to squeeze out over break and make it so someone besides myself can understand it.

Aren't we as seniors in the editing process of our lives this year? Over break, relatives drilled me on what I plan to do after graduation. After a while I had my spiel down quite well and it seemed to be what everyone wanted to hear. It even started to sound good to me. Amazingly, I could even pull it off on New Years Eve under the trance of a good bottle of wine. This routine bored me to death. I'm not bored with my life, but annoyed that my relatives couldn't get the story from someone else. Sometimes I wonder if they are really even interested or simply trying to make polite conversation. Couldn't I just make up some simple tape recording to give my relatives for the holiday? It would show me in my sardine can dorm room working, show me going to classes, the dining hall, and the highlight of the day--checking my mail--only to find that it is empty. A voice seemingly programmed into me pretends to be excited about my life and my future. This same programmed process is activated when I read the drafts of my project over and over

and over as the words gnaw away at my brain. It melts the excitement of the writing process away and makes the paper dull as I read it for the tenth time. I can't help thinking how this time seems so much more difficult than previous times.

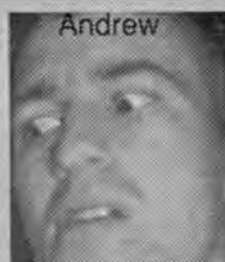
For any student this is one of the harder times of the academic year; after having been on break for over a month and living life at one's own leisurely pace, college seems impossible. Returning to Bard gives me mixed feelings, because I am happy to see all the familiar faces again, but afraid of the pressure of papers, tests, and other sorts of deadlines that I know will rear their ugly heads in the next couple of weeks. Throw on the pressure of the midway, and it makes coming back to school that much harder. But who would I rather face in the end Aunt X or Professor X? I choose the professor. I will not deny that I dread this meeting, as I hate being the center of any group's attention. If I felt otherwise, I would be in the theater department. Midway is what I consider reaching the top of the hill and the rest, although it may hold some difficulties, is coasting down. While the actual meeting is probably the most painful process of all the senior events we have to endure, it is the pinnacle. We've already come up with the basic ideas and outlined them by this point. Midway is when we face the music and are put on a new track to finish up over the next few months. While the final senior project board meeting is meant to critique the project as well, it is also a time that marks closure for most. It is when a student can present their final project in all its completion and glory, rather than having the board looking at a project that is nearly half completed and full of not-so-well hidden problems.

I've realized that professors aren't out to get me necessarily, just to lead me in the right direction when I've run fresh into a dead-end. Even though during my midway I might feel like a hunted rabbit whose heart is ready to break through its rib cage, I can't escape midway. Besides, I've worked really hard on what I've got now and even with its fallacies I'm proud of it. So bring on midway.

the bootleg "Guy@KLME"



Matthew Deady will pump his dog Beta full of steroids, and then she will rip me limb from limb.



Bernard Greenwald: Evil spirits will possess him and he will gouge me to death with his print making tools.



John Brockopp will mistake me for President Botstein and exact his cold revenge.



Arthur Burrows, he would send Fred Hammond to assassinate me with arsenic.



Bill Maple will poison me with something that grows on campus.



Aureliano de Soto, by making me sit in front of reruns of Fear Factor, in a room filled with cigarette smoke.

Which Bard professor is going to murder you, and how are they going to take your ass out?

On Women

J. Low Breaks it Down

By Jeremy Low



If I may, allow me to begin with a disclaimer. You will, in all probability, disagree with what I have to say, and my experience being limited at best, I speak with my tongue occasionally in my cheek and most often without knowledge. That being out of the way, I should start with this aphorism: of all of God's creation, the giant squid excepted, women are the most enigmatic and dangerous of all. Their capacity to forgive knows only too many bounds, their caprice knows few, and their hearts none. That is to say that above all, they are creatures of the heart. While their intellect will not be disparaged here, in matters of the heart it is notably absent. Men can, and certainly should be convicted of the same, but this is not an article about the brutish sex, only the fairer. As I said, my experience is limited at best, but I did grow up with three women (not the sisters of Shakespeare, though I confess I would be hard pressed to name the differences). They were not of the easy-going sort; in short they were normal as I have found in the past twenty years or so.

Women who are not of a man's family pose an even greater challenge to knowledge than those of his blood. But note: not to comprehension or understanding, for these are fool's pursuits and have been since time immemorial, but rather to knowledge in general. They confound every rule on every level. They rarely break these rules, for this would be too simple; rather, they enshroud everything in a blanket of riddles so thick that this can have little effect other than utter despair for those who become so enveloped. Better men than I have tried to coerce order (or at least the appearance of such) out

of this phenomenon and have failed miserably. Bearing this in mind, this essay (in the truest sense of an attempt) will not, for you or anyone else, yield a better understanding of the fairer sex. Most likely it will simply encourage even more confusion (and probably hateful glances in my direction at the very least). This is certainly not my aim but rather the only possible outcome of such an article (which was not even my idea: I write at the behest of a friend and editor). And so to begin...

As a species, I love women. I can hardly deny it and what's more, I admit it freely. They are completely singular in their habits and all the more because not a single one could be taken as an example of the whole of woman-dom. Were this taken as a rule for nature, every beast in the wild would act without similarity to the next, with complete abandon and without regard to a single external factor. In short, fish would walk and mammals might just as well have gills. This is not to don some sort of biological argument but rather to eschew it. Every woman I have ever talked to has been different from the next. Though you may accuse me of stating the obvious, allow me to explain by way of comparison: while men are just as unique as women we generally fit into genres. That is to say, though I am quite different than Tom sitting directly across the table from me, we exist as "Bard Boys," for the most part. There are discernable traits which we could both stomach being applied to our personalities (I'm not going to go into them here, as that is outside the scope of this article, though I would very much like to read that piece sometime). And yet I have not heard and have not been able to apply any sort of category to any of the women I have met here or anywhere else (save one category of girls at Bard, but that is scarcely to be repeated in mixed company).

As it were, one must deal with women on an individual basis; to learn the nature of one (if this is indeed possible) is to be completely in the dark about another. But lest this become too depressing, I will move on. Someone, and forgive me for not remembering who, said once that hate is not the antithesis of love; rather, that place is rather occupied by indifference. Hence, this single piece of advice: argue. The most important thing one can do is make an impression, lest you are never even allowed the chance to inquire as to her heart. What better way than to piss someone off, but please read to at least the end of this paragraph so you can see where I am going with this. This is not to say that I have found insulting a lady will get you in like Flynn, for that would be so childish that we might as well start pulling each other's hair and fighting on the playground. But give it a bit of thought: we all possess at least a modicum of intelligence and surely we all have at least a few opinions, so why not discuss them. This is not to say that you should try discussion the entire oeuvre of Jacques Lacan (I tried, so this is the point at which experience actually rears its ugly head), but a heated argument leaves neither party forgotten or worse yet, bored.

Since I fear that Bard parties will become tantamount to fist fights about what Peter Sourian said in class that day, I will add one more thing before I conclude. This is certainly not foolproof and if you are indeed a fool, I wouldn't suggest trying it, but if you must, don't use this article as an excuse to be that arrogant kid at the party who talks everyone's ear off (I regret that I am still learning that lesson). And lest this becomes an advice column I will conclude:

I said that I loved women. I do. They are strong and vulnerable and there is little better than being there for your girl when she needs you or you need her. If there is one thing I've found, it's this: I hope that I never learn everything about the topic on which I write to you now for it would lose all interest and every hint of mystery would be exploded. But I should end now, and I believe I'll do it with a quote which has served me well, though it lies contrary to most of what I have just written, yet it serves as a nice counterpoint to my overemotional and mostly sappy paean now committed to paper. It is from Lord Chesterfield as he described to his son the act which makes a man a man: "The pleasure is momentary, the position ridiculous and the expense damnable."

Fred and Me

The Human Consequences of N.A.F.T.A.

By: Matt Rozsa

I never liked Michael Moore. I still don't. He strikes me as a pompous know-it-all, and I find many of his views on foreign policy to be short-sighted and ignorant. And so when I watched "Roger & Me" several months ago at the behest of a friend, I was perpetually wary of the content. There they were, a bunch of automobile manufacturers who had just lost their jobs because General Motors CEO Roger Smith had just exported them overseas. Moore was using pathos instead of logos to frame the argument of his film, I figured; Smith probably had very sound economical reasons for doing what he did, and besides, Moore probably exaggerated the human elements of his story, as he always does.

Enter Fred Baer. A bespectacled 57-year-old man with graying hair and a cerebral ring in his voice, I had primarily known Mr. Baer through a long-standing close friendship with his son, Andy. His job was once that of a senior materials technician at Ingersoll-Rand Laboratories in Phillipsburg, NJ. I preface his job title with the adjective "once" because, as you can probably guess, he was recently laid off.

"The god of Wall Street demanded manufacturing facilities more return for their investment," Fred explains, "so instead of accepting 18% for their investments, they demanded 20% or more." In order to do this, Ingersoll-Rand made a very simple decision; they traded jobs for profit. By exporting the jobs of both Fred and many of his co-workers overseas to places like China, they are able to pay Third World workers a fraction of the American wage to perform the same. The consequences of this for Fred Baer's future employment prospects could be dire.

Which isn't to say that Fred is untrained. Quite to the contrary, he received a formal 8,000 hour apprenticeship as a machinist toolmaker, completed three years at Penn State for on-the-job training for an associate's degree, took metallurgy courses in ASM to learn lab work, various courses in SUNY-Albany for x-ray defraction, and a wide variety of other minor courses throughout his career. Alan Greenspan and his ilk claim that those

who have been laid off simply need to be "retrained." Fred responds, "Retrained in what? Many of the computer jobs are being exported to India; many of the other jobs which they claim we'll be good at are jobs which companies would much rather prefer giving to younger people. Regardless of the law, nobody has to employ a 57-year-old war veteran with white hair. They know it is often too draining on us to file age discrimination lawsuits, and besides, they can find any number of other 'reasons' to avoid making you a liability."

Fred Baer is by no means the only American today suffering from this problem. Because of organizations like NAFTA and the WTO, it is both easier and more desirable for American companies to export their jobs overseas so as to increase their profit. The short-term consequences of this are sobering, as the situation of both Fred Baer and thousands of other American workers indicates; the long-term consequences, however, are also particularly negative. As political and economic commentator Lou Dobbs points out, there is a significant risk in allowing America's economy to become less independent by moving our manufacturing base abroad. Not only could it potentially lead to a lopsided economic structure, it could also make our nation's foreign policy interests more easily manipulated by nations like Mexico, India, and China, where those jobs have been relocated to.

By no means does this article do an adequate job of describing the negative situation that currently exists in our country because of this issue, but I hope it makes a start. Whether your proposed solution to this problem is the International Minimum Wage of Dick Gephardt or the tax breaks to companies which hire Americans instead of overseas workers supported by John Edwards, it is an issue of paramount importance.

FRANK ANSWERS

Advice From Miss Frank

Main Entry: 1frankPronunciation: 'fra[ng]k Function: adjective Etymology: Middle English, free, from Old French franc, from Medieval Latin francus, from Late Latin Francus Frank1 : marked by free, forthright, and sincere expression <a frank reply> 2 a : unmistakably evident <frank materialism> b : clinically evident and unmistakable <frank pus>

We can't promise all that...but we can try.

Dear Miss Frank,
Who's my baby daddy?

-Drunk

Dear Drunk,
Matt Wing.

Dear Miss Frank,

Every morning, no matter what I do the night before, I always find that my thumb is firmly lodged in my ass! I've tried everything, but it's always relocated in the morning. Is this normal? What should I do?

-Plugged Up

Dear Plugged,

There's really nothing I can tell you, except to make sure you take it out again. And no, this is not normal.

Dear Miss Frank,

Ever since puberty, I've had a lot of body hair, especially on my back and chest. I'm very self-conscious about it, and I think sometimes it turns girls off; I haven't had a date in quite a while. Is there anything I can do to remove it?

-Fuzzy Wuzzy

Dear Fuzzy Wuzzy,

Why would you want to?! The more, the sexier, I say! Your problem seems to be that you aren't making the most of your hairy man jungle. Give your hair some flair! Try jazzing it up with some pretty braids or colorful ribbons, but most of all, make sure you're not hiding it away! Be proud. It's an asset, not an embarrassment.

Confidential to Invisible Woman:

Stomp on his toes. If he screams, but accepts your apologies, give him another chance and calmly explain. If he doesn't react, tell him how it hurts your feelings. If he stomps back, dump him. But if he steps back and asks if you have enough room, then it's true love.

Got questions?
Well, we've got answers,
even if they're not the right
ones. Send them to:
Observer@bard.edu.

25 Years with Botstein

Our President sat down with the Observer to talk about where Bard's been, where it's at, and where it's going.

by Michael Haggerty

Observer: You've been here for 25 years now. Did you ever think you would be at Bard for this long?

Botstein: I didn't think about it. I never have thought in a long-term way. One doesn't take life for granted. One thinks about one's ambitions in terms of the work one wants to do.

You think in five, ten, fifteen year intervals in terms of books you want to write, or recordings you want to make, or performances you want to give. But in terms of work where a lot is dependent upon your relationships with other people, it's not your own work. You're not in control of all the variables. It's very presumptuous to think in a very long term way. You take

things in sequence, as they come.

Observer: You do a lot of different types of work. You're a conductor, a college administrator, and a writer. Do you feel like all of these things are interrelated in any way, or do you see them as separate parts of your life?

Botstein: They're entirely interrelated. The work that I do as a musician and as a scholar are crucial to being a college president, which is about encouraging students to aspire to make work, to write, to be artists or scholars. It's very hard to administer something if you don't do it yourself. I wouldn't want to be a patient in a hospital where the person running it wasn't himself or herself a functioning physician.

It seems to me that a university or a college needs to have as its chief administrator someone who represents the values that you're trying to engender in an institution. Having as an administrator someone who did it a long time ago, who doesn't do it anymore, puts that person out of touch with the aspirations of young people.

Observer: When you came to Bard, what kind of goals did you set for the values you wanted to instill in the college? What kind of problems were there with Bard that needed to be immediately addressed?

Botstein: The reason I came to Bard was that Bard seemed to me one of the few places where there was a possibility of sustaining a real idealism about learning and about teaching. It was a place where it could be done unconventionally and where the connection of the arts to the other disciplines could be fostered.

It seemed to me a place with a tremendous heritage of a commitment to the individual student and to the love of learning—a place with an enormously honest tradition and fantastic potential.

The major problems 25 years ago

were that the college had always been very small, had no endowment, and was very poor. Bard had been an independent institution since the late '40s and it had a lot of institutional and financial challenges facing it. My predecessor, Reamer Kline, had been here for 14 years. He had a harder job. When he came in 1960 the place was truly in dire straits and I had the benefit of picking up where he left off.

Observer: Currently, there is a feeling on campus that in Admissions there is a move to attract a different type of student to Bard than in the past.

Botstein: Well, I think this is simply a suspicion that has been around for 25 years.

getting in and coming are very much the same kind of young person, with the same set of ambitions.

There is always some change in the culture of young people, though that has to do not at all with Bard but with the fact that the political perspective of every entering class is different. A student entering next year, let's say, is aged 18 and was born in 1982. Their major memory as a young child may be the end of the cold war. That's very different from a student who entered in 1975, who was born in 1967, whose first memory may have been Watergate. So we have to accept that there will be inevitable change that has nothing to do with Bard.

Bard seemed to me one of the few places where there was a possibility of sustaining a real idealism about learning and about teaching. . . . A place with an enormously honest tradition and fantastic potential.

This is not a new sentiment. Every senior class, every current student body has held the next generation in some sort of suspicion. This is a Bard tradition: to worry about the fact that somebody is changing the Admissions process.

The truth of the matter is that Admissions is not controlled by the institution. It's controlled by the young people who apply. Every institution attracts, historically, a pretty coherent student interest. And the college, in the last 25 years has strengthened its position in the arts. It has risen in the estimation of the generation who is coming into college, in terms of its academic reputation, if you will. And therefore it has become more popular.

In 1975, when I came, there were 4 applicants for every place available. There are now 10 applicants for every place. That has made it more competitive, but the competition doesn't involve a change in the student body. In fact, if you look at the senior projects this year, it is amazing how much consistency there is with the kind of projects students have made at Bard over the past 25 years.

What has changed is that in 1975, about 30 percent of the entering class didn't graduate. So that's a change. And it is harder to get in to, but the people who are

Observer: Do you see any sort of change in the type of students coming here, in terms of the educational background that they bring from high school?

Botstein: I would say that Bard students are better prepared now than they were in the past. That doesn't mean secondary education is better. But the student who comes to Bard is better prepared to do high quality work from the first year on. That has little to do with what's happened in secondary education; it has more to do with the ambitions and focus, if you will, of the students that come here.

Observer: The student government in the last few months has been going to the deans with concerns about Bard, and where Bard's going. One of the biggest issues is Albee. What is your response to those complaints?

Botstein: As I understand them, the complaints are based on a false belief in a conspiracy to move students off main campus—which is wrong. There is no such conspiracy. What students attach themselves to in terms of concerns or complaints—which is legitimate, they have every right to complain—always changes. What is the case is that students become very attached to the college as they know it.

For example, students were very angry when we moved students out of Blithewood and built new dormitories [the Toasters] closer to main campus. We were accused of controlling, bringing students too close to main campus. If you have a historical perspective on it, you realize that the complaint is understandable, but it's not in response to a real conspiracy to do something "wrong."

What is happening is that the college and the faculty has grown in size. There has to be a close contact between where faculty teach and where students go to study. Office space has to be in a reasonable proximity to classrooms. The college is short on classrooms; the college is expanding its science program; the college isn't rich. So just look at the geometry: where are you going to put new classrooms and a science building?

Albee has to be renovated, one way or the other. The age of the building and new requirements—in terms of fire safety, access, all these things—make the renovation difficult. You can grandfather a building, but once you make it a residence hall the requirements go up. It's much less expensive and much more convenient—in the best sense, not the negative sense—for students to have classrooms and offices in Albee if we have to expand classrooms and teaching space. It's near the computer center, it's near the library, it's near the warden's hall offices, it's near Hegeman. When you put all that together, there are very limited choices. Will the college in the long term build new dormitories on the upper campus? Probably yes.

I would say that the concern for Albee is understandable, but some of it is based on the misapprehension of a lack of concern for students' well-being. But it also reflects an instinctive conservatism by which student bodies understandably get very attached to the college as they know it. It's interesting—the alumni are very enthusiastic about the renovation of Albee into classrooms. They helped us as they did with the warden's hall, even though they lived there. As they graduated the college they had a desire for the college to grow and change.

When I go back to my own alma mater, I don't think, "Well, they made a mistake by turning where I used to live into classrooms." I was very attached to the music building at the University of Chicago—very attached. They tore it down! They built a new music building and I thought that was great. Although many formative moments of my life took place in that ramshackle building which we

... continued top of next page

thought was very intimate and put us very close together, the music department is a much better and much more effective place now than it was when I was an undergraduate.

Observer: It seems like the issue of Albee has come to represent the larger issue that Bard is losing a distinct feeling of community—where people are interacting on main campus, coming into contact with each other, and living where they study.

Botstein: Well, I think that's wrong. I say that from many years of experience. I think that's a wrong assessment. Now it's easy for me to say that's a wrong assessment, but that's what they say and therefore they feel it. But remember the student government is a very peculiar one here. It's a creature of something that happened in the late '70s—it's not a conventional student government. Most student governments are represented by dormitories and by classes. It's a student government that legitimately wants to assert itself, as it should.

These issues are both symbolic and real. You know about the symbolism, but the real issue is not Albee. The transformation of Albee into a teaching space will benefit students. It's not against students. And where students live—there's been a change of taste over the years. Some people want to be further away; some people once recommended we put the dorms in remote areas; some people have favored centralizing it. There's not a consistency in points of view over the years. Students' tastes change.

On the question of community... Students for years begged us to build a campus center. Then you have a new generation that says, "Well, we don't like the Campus Center. We like the Old Gym." There will be a generation of students two years from now for whom the absence of the student center would be unthinkable.

What really hasn't changed with the student position is that there shouldn't be decentralized dining. I'm opposed to that, some of my colleagues are in favor of that, but I actually believe that centralized dining is a way of creating community. But when Kline Commons was built—people used to eat in Proctor—people were against Kline Commons. People are resistant to changes in this way.

The most important aspect of community is the increased size of the college—which hasn't really changed in the last couple years, so I'm surprised that this comes up now. I would have understood if the college had grown from 700 students to 1,200 students in three years—then there would be a change.

In my view, the two most important factors for the perception of a "declining" community—which I don't see, but it's easy for me to say I don't share it—is the growth of Tivoli as a destination point and the increased use of computers.

In the old days, people complained that there was no place to go, and there was in fact a time when students approached us to build dormitories in Tivoli in order to create Tivoli as a sort of town for the college. So, we have to deal with shifting student opinion.

The other factor—and it's all through American academic life—is the Internet, the computer, and the amount of time people spend alone, in their rooms, communicating by email, not in person, not by telephone. And this is a phenomenon throughout American higher education. You may not think it's very strong, but a lot of people spend a lot of time by themselves using a machine. I think it's a wonderful thing, but it's a different way in which students have chosen to spend their time.

And I don't think the complaints are as broadly based as the student government makes it out to be. The student body

does not think, thank god, in one way there are many people with different views. And Bard has always been a place of small communities—around film, around theater, around photography. That has always put, to some extent, a general student government at a disadvantage, because there are so many small units of communities, usually around interests that students have. I don't think that has changed; in fact, it has grown dramatically.

The complaints have to be taken seriously, because they reflect things we have to do. But when we respond—which we will—to student concerns, we have to be prepared for the next generation of students who might not like what we did because they have a different concern.

The other thing about the EPC, tenure, and evaluations and there, I think, is a tremendous amount of misinter-

able system and it puts a tremendously difficult burden on us to make a decision to give someone a job for life. Especially if the primary emphasis of the job is how good a teacher the individual is. There is no one who's come up for tenure for whom there has not been student support, even in the case I just mentioned.

We hire very good people and nobody comes to the tenure line without a substantial amount of student support—they wouldn't get that far. The decision of tenure is not whether the person is a good teacher now. The question is will that person be a good teacher, what's the prediction?

Observer: That can also change, over the course of time...

Botstein: Yes. This is at best an informed guess. It's a judgement about whether

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Chatting inside Botstein's cave: While expressing a concern for student issues, President Botstein was quick to point out that small things that appear to be "harbingers of change" become less significant when the looks at the larger picture.

mation around the issue. The majority of the pieces of paper in the tenure and review files are student evaluations. There was a case, two years ago, when the faculty recommended somebody for tenure and the EPC did not. We denied the person tenure. One of the reasons was the EPC recommendation. There's a recent history where someone actually lost a job as a result of the formal EPC recommendation. If you have a historical view, the complaint that we don't listen to student input is actually incorrect.

Observer: In general, though, what do you think of tenure? Do you feel like it's an outdated academic institution?

Botstein: I am not a fan of the tenure system. I think that tenure is an unreason-

able system and it puts a tremendously difficult burden on us to make a decision to give someone a job for life. That's a decision we have to make and that's a very tough decision. Students will come to me and say, "Well, the person up for tenure is a better teacher than so and so who's a senior faculty member, who's been here for x numbers of years." And my response to that person is, "But x numbers years ago, that person came up for tenure and the students said, 'This person is the best teacher I've had.'" The question is how do you judge the trajectory of an individual's potential as a teacher from when they're young and relatively new at the job, and how they will be over many, many years to come. And that's a very unreasonable decision.

Observer: Some students have said that the tenure and rehiring system hasn't, in the past few years, been very conducive to creating a diverse faculty in terms of women and people of color.

Botstein: That's statistically untrue—simply not true. And I would suggest that if you want to test that proposition, just look at the numbers. There's been a steady increase in the diversity of people of color. It's the easiest accusation to make and it is also the easiest accusation to confront with facts. I suggest you go to the Dean and simply look at the record.

Not everything that people allege is true, and I am responsible to tell the truth. Therefore, if I say it isn't true, I have to be right or else I'm not fulfilling my responsibility. Compare the number of minority and women faculty from 1975 to the year 2000—look at the 25 year record.

Observer: One last question... Where do you see yourself and Bard in say, five years, since that's the time frame you think in?

Botstein: The older one gets, the more modest one becomes in terms of looking into the future. I would say that the most important thing that needs to be remembered is that institutional characters are much stronger than the characters of individuals. My work as president has been to continue and strengthen a Bard that existed before I arrived, and my obligation is to continue to do that into the future. And that means expanding the resources for students.

We will be building the performing arts center which will greatly improve the facilities for students of drama, theater, and dance, and will also provide a larger auditorium for other events in the college. We will improve the science facilities on campus. We will renovate and enlarge the film and music facilities, so when the theater and dance departments move into

the new building, that building will be turned over to film, video, and music. The college will build new dormitories and will eventually renovate the older dormitories. We have to prepare for the eventuality that more students will want to live on campus, so we will probably be in the business of thinking about more dormitory and faculty housing on campus. Some of that will take place on the upper campus.

I think that you can't work in a place for 25 years without developing a deep affection for the spirit of the place. And there is, in the end of the day, a tremendous amount of personal commitment, but also a deep sense of continuity. Small things seem very significant, they seem to be harbingers of change. But when you step away, there's a continuity. You look very carefully at, for example, cloth, and what seems to be a continuous piece turns out to be a jumble of very different asymmetrical strands. Was the spirit of Bard appreciably changed by, for example, turning the warden's hall into faculty offices? The answer is no.

What holds the place consistently to its own purposes is the quality of faculty and the quality of students. We have here today more fantastic teachers, scholars, writers, artists, musicians, poets, and researchers than the college has ever had in its history. And it is those individuals and the students whom they attract and keep that sustain the long time spirit of Bard.

Horoscopes

By Madame Babarosky-Smith

Sagittarius: November 22-December 21

You are truly in a funk. The kind of funk that George Clinton wouldn't even try to touch. And I hate to say it, but it's all your fault. You have been saying no to opportunities you yourself create. The planets cannot help you when you yourself don't recognize their power. Watch out for the fifteenth, twentieth and twenty-first of this month, events that may seem ordinary are anything but. Your salvation, though in your own hands, is seeded in those days, pay a little more attention to creating a solid future and a little less time focusing on the days you have wasted.

Capricorn: December 22-January 19

There is a strong pull on you this month. It is a pull to go back to ways that once were. A visitor will play a large part in your decision to either go forward or backward. Both directions have promise and goodness in them but it is up to you to decipher which way is best for you. Try not to get into cars with strangers for awhile, even if you consider them acquaintances it will not turn out well.

Aquarius: January 20-February 17

Celebrate while the celebrating is good. Live it up my friend, you have every reason to. Things are getting back on track after being terribly wrong and they will only get better. If you have the chance to gamble, go all in. There are very few cosmic periods where nothing can go wrong, but this month is your cosmic and karmic time to recoup on the damages of the last few months. Pay attention to the girl with curly hair, she will teach you a few things.

Pisces: February 18- March 19

Keep it together.

Aries: March 20-April 19

You're doing alright in almost every quarter of your life. Almost being the key word in that sentence. Don't dwell on how great the good things are, instead jump into fixing the few trouble areas you have left. Someone important to you is having a birthday soon, don't forget it, for if you do that relationship will need some serious fixing. Also, watch out for the nineteenth, it will be harder that it seems.

Taurus: April 20-May 19

You are stubborn everyone is saying so, openly and behind your back. You think it's always someone else making things difficult. And that is true but only in part, people make things hard for you because you make things hard for them. I see a musical event in your future, stay away from the color red.

Gemini: May 20-June 20

Though your mother wouldn't ever say it, I will, you're being an asshole. Stop being an asshole. You are charming and bright and industrious by nature and kind to those you love, but it seems as if you've forgotten all your good qualities. And you better watch out or all of those who are waiting for you to get over it will stop waiting and forget these qualities as well. The planets have a fabulous event in the making for you, but if you don't stop being an asshole it's going to become its antithesis. If you want to have fun in the future, stop being such a tool.

Cancer: June 21-July 21

You're missing the sun something awful and it's making you gloomy on the inside. It's courageous and admirable of you to pretend nothing's wrong, but no one will blame you or think less of you if you let a little of the gloom come out. Everyone around you feels that something is wrong and your refusal to share worries them. Be nice to animals this month, they will provide you with a good connection for a future project.

Leo: July 22-August 22

You are troubled by someone close to you. It is good for you to be concerned but watch out, no matter how much concern you show they are not destined to be the same. You must stop living your life through their eyes and find your own sight again. You've been missing out on some kick-ass chances, next time one comes along, forget your concern over another and go for it.

Virgo: August 23-September 21

Wow, you sure have been breaking the mold a bit these last few months! I'm proud of your get up and go spirit, a rare thing for a Virgo. Your travel plans will turn out just the way you hoped and home will still be home whenever you do get back. Good luck and have fun.

Libra: September 22-October 22

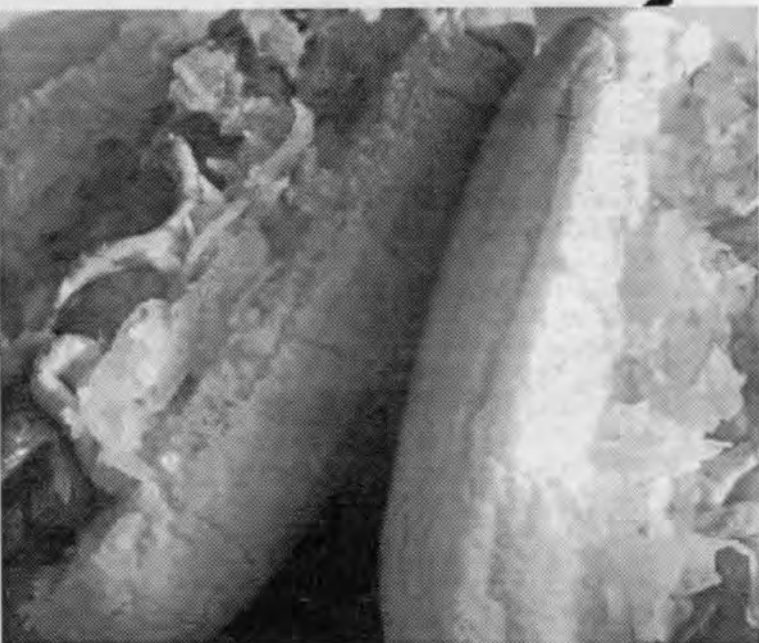
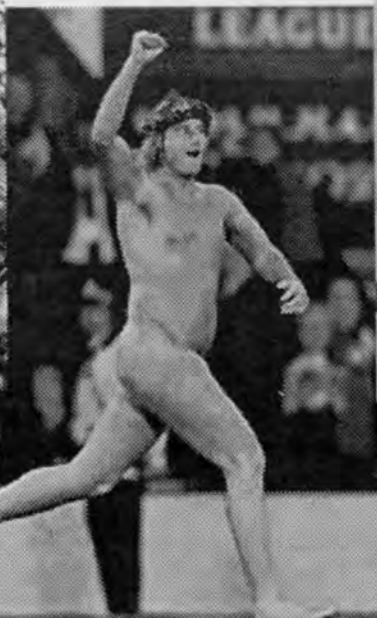
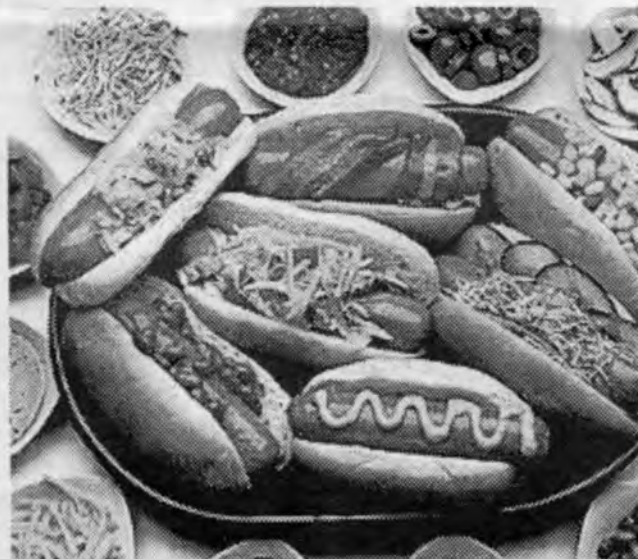
I once asked you to consider your life like a quilt, and you haven't, so I'm simply going to repeat what I said before: Have you ever made a quilt? If you have, you know the intense planning and then work it takes. You should look at your life this month and every month as if it was a quilt: it won't get made (let alone made well) without you taking a proactive and progressive approach to it.

Listen to me, I'm a goddamn astrologer, I know MORE than you.

Scorpio: October 23-November 21

Inferiority is getting the better of you, it shouldn't, you're better than all of them. Now, without you letting this fact get to your head, go be better!

THE OBSERVER SALUTES THE HOT DOG

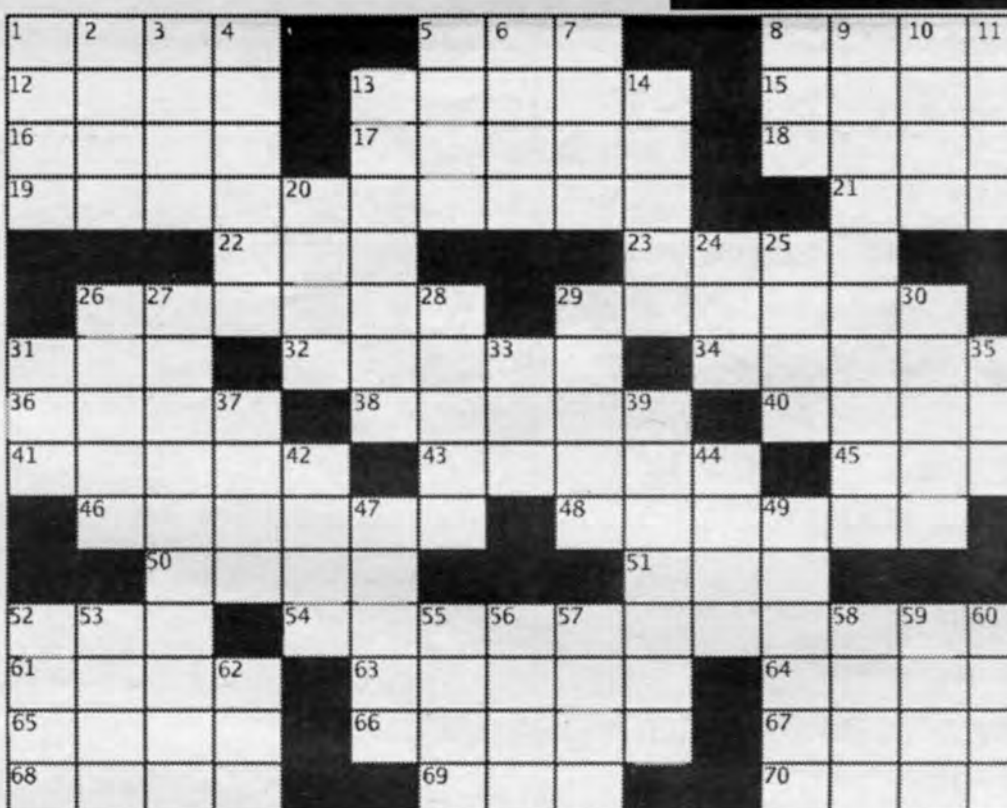


Across:

1. Gaseous body
5. Eastern leader
8. Poet --- St. Vincent Millay
12. The sea, archaically.
13. The ---- & the Fury
15. Geography, succinctly
16. --- = Pi * r * r
17. To make joyous
18. Scandinavian capital
19. You may ask for it
21. A ---- in the machine
22. --- out, apropos women or dinner
23. Yell, Simba-style
26. Like most nuns
29. Female wig
31. "It is" to a poet
32. Doric column molding
34. Asian ox
36. Depp film
38. Muse of lyric poetry
40. Westchester Congresswoman
41. Some trucks
43. Said to bring babies
45. US Nuke Agency, for short
46. Give a new eponym
47. Go against
50. Happened to a hymen
51. Carnal act
52. Mongrel, eg.
54. Woven together
61. Spanish dish or hodgepodge
63. "Back to you, Al", eg.
64. Morrison, Braxton
65. S. Am. Empire
66. Length of time since I got laid
67. College est'd by Henry VI
68. The ---- Samurai
69. Supersonic transport, for short
70. Found in many classrooms

Down:

1. ----stick
2. 50 across, archaically
3. To prove
4. One who reams
5. Macedonian Info Service, abbr.
6. Russ. mountain range
7. 1st Holy Roman Emperor
8. Ich (Lat.)
9. Illustrating
10. ---- contendere (Lat.)
11. Agast, syn.
13. Gay, eg.
14. ---- Bergson
20. Jafar's bird
24. Transport, "Charmed" style
25. Alike
26. More heinous
27. Type of exercise routine
29. She kept this clean (AC/DC)
30. Our (Fr.)
31. Superstation, abbr.
33. Muscle grp
35. Bard Org.
37. Type of drunkard
38. Play of Euripides
42. Could be a curtain or skirt
44. Formerly know
47. Intelligent Org.
49. Left
52. Snake, verb'd syn.
53. Radius's neighbor
55. They're in a golfer's bag
56. Rock band Freud would have enjoyed
57. Smallest (as in, litter)
58. Might be passed in class
59. ---- Slaughter (Baseball)
60. Drop-shot (Tennis)
62. A grain (sign.)



CROSSWORD
BY JEREMY LOW

Adventures in Bardland: By Emily Sauter



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BACK ON THE AIR SOON...

BEEYATCH!

observer

by Hamish Strong

by Hamish Strong



by Kevin Wright

